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The Beaver

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The Beaver

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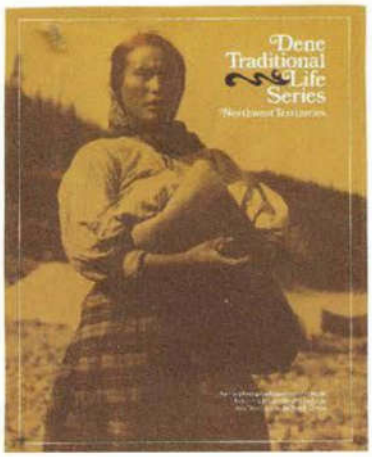

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"Northcote" at Fort Edmonton, 1875. By Peter Rindlisbacher.

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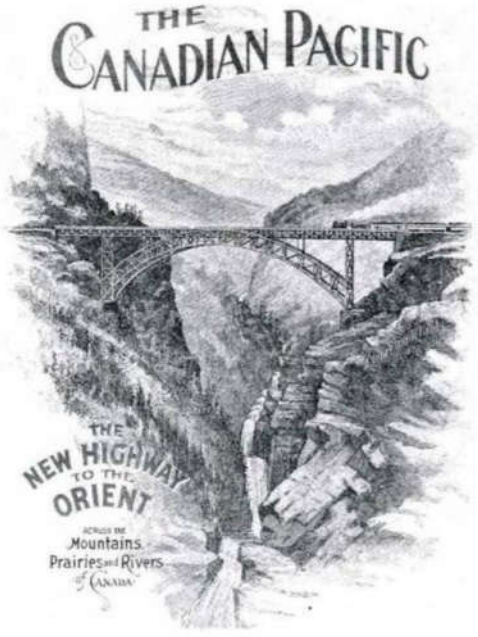
The Great West, Summer 1887

It is always an astonishing thing to put out your hand and suddenly touch the past. It happened to me recently as I was sorting out some old family papers. In a bundle of letters dating back to the 1880s I noticed a small, leather-bound notebook. The first few pages consisted of pencil drawings in a fairly juvenile and untrained hand depicting "Indians at Calgary", a Chinese man with a long pig-tail and a sketch of "Papa looking at the scenery" — a pensive, middle-aged gentleman with side whiskers and a skull-cap, a good enough likeness to identify him to me as my great-grandfather, father to my paternal grandmother.

There is no name written on the journal, but there is evidence in the text that indicates that it was almost certainly the property and keepsake of my grandmother Alice Parmelee, born at Waterloo, Quebec, in 1867 and just 16 years old when the first entries — describing a visit with her parents and sisters to Tadoussac in 1883 — were written neatly in pencil.

The Tadoussac journal tells of the things one might expect a young girl to be amused and interested by on such a tour: visits to an Indian wigwam, a boat ride, the sighting of a school of porpoise, encounters with colourful Quebecers, a good sermon at church on Sunday, etc. The only bit of unpleasantness seems to have taken place when the young women went bathing, presumably in the river, and "Mr. Frank L. watched us in a very provoking manner."



Not much else happened on that peaceful 1883 journey and there are no more entries in the journal until 28 June 1887 when the diarist and her Papa set off from their home in Ottawa on a train journey that would take them across Canada to the Pacific coast and on to Oregon.

My grandmother lived to be nearly 100 and when she was very old she used to talk to me about a train journey she once took with her father. Her stories were mostly about playing euchre or getting a cinder in her eye. Details about destinations and places visited were not forthcoming and I always assumed that she was describing rail trips between her home in Ottawa and the Eastern Townships. Such junketings were certainly interesting to hear about almost a century on, but if I had known that she was recalling an early transcontinental rail trip I would have pressed her for more details. The memories of that long ago journey on the new railway across the young Dominion died with her long ago and now I can get only a glimpse of the passing scene as she recorded it briefly in her little book.

Old people carry history about in their minds, but we often wait too long to ask them for the details. They leave us before we are ready to ask the right questions or memory fades before the recollection is recorded. With each death and with every fading memory something of the reality of the past slips away. Many of us have known people who spoke to Macdonald and Laurier, who served in the North-West Rebellion or the Boer War and too often we have waited too long to hear them describe their first-hand impressions of a lost Canada that we can only imperfectly imagine. The discovery of a journal or a bundle of old letters in the attic can help us renew contact with the dead and give us a glimpse of the world they knew.

A journey across the nation on the new transcontinental railway was a tremendous undertaking in 1887. Much of the West was still unpeopled, the smoke of the North-West Rebellion was just fading away and most of the great Western plain remained unplanted. A journey West came under the heading "Great Adventure". People were not used to long voyages by rail. It all took some getting used to. An early entry reads: "I got quite ill just after dinner and cast up my

accounts". My grandmother was always given to euphemism.

Interesting things were passed as the train puffed along: the beautiful shore of Lake Superior, old Fort William and miles of golden buttercups along the right-of-way.

Then, on a Friday morning at half past nine, the train rolled into Winnipeg. The first person she saw on the platform was her future husband, although marriage was still some years ahead and the one-man welcoming delegation may have been seen simply as a very attentive young man the family had known earlier in Ottawa. He was in Winnipeg working for a local paper, the *Free Press*.

The Ottawa party was soon lodged in the Queen's Hotel close to the corner of Portage and Main, baths were ordered and Papa, who, as a Dominion deputy minister, was actually on a business trip, went off to inspect the local government offices. His daughter was left to explore the city, then a rising boom town, described by some as "the Chicago of the North".

She had tea at half past five and "at half past six went for a long drive all over the city. The streets were very wide, but very straggling. After riding three hours and a half went home and to bed." A three-hour drive around Winnipeg in 1887 must have taken her past the same buildings several times over. Perhaps she was riding with her future husband.

The next day they visited "the Japanese store" and the Hudson's Bay Store on Main Street. They were just too late to see old Fort Garry, which had been demolished in that decade.

On Monday father and daughter left by train for "the far West". It was early July and the great prairie was an ocean of wildflowers as far as the eye could see. She got off the train at Brandon to pick some of the brilliant wildflowers and nearly got left behind. Farther West, through the Cypress Hills and near Maple Creek, there were heaps of buffalo bones among the flowers and bands of Indians passing on horseback. They played euchre and drank lemonade as the train passed through the more or less uninhabited landscape. At stops along the way they were sold buffalo horns and skulls to carry away as souvenirs. No live buffalo were to be seen, only heaps of bones along the rail line, waiting to be carted away. They were fascinated by the prairie dogs that stood on their hills as the train went by. And there were flowers everywhere, "very thick and so many colours — rose, pink and white, bluebells, sunflowers. . ." One morning they looked out from the train and saw a large wolf walking along the plains.

During a stop-over at Calgary a Chinese man with a long pig-tail and a pointed hat came to collect the laundry and later everybody was annoyed when the train passed Banff at three in the morning when they were all asleep.

In the morning there were mountains all around them. They sped through tunnels and along cliffs. "We keep crossing bridges", she wrote at one point, "and have 1,249 more to cross before we get to Vancouver. We are up from the river bed thousands of feet and then we look up into the sky and see the mountains towering up above us. I never saw such scenery! It affects me like a funeral." I suppose that she meant that all the grandeur made her feel solemn and the beauty brought tears to her eyes.

Finally they arrived in Vancouver, which was "larger than Brandon and has grown up very rapidly in one

National Archives of Canada

"Some Prairie Flowers and a Prairie Dog", watercolour by Edward Roper, Broadview, August, 1887.

year. All burned down a year ago. We went to the Leland Hotel, just facing the bay. A lovely view from the gallery. A very large Japanese steamship in, the cargo not yet discharged. From the hotel steps we can see snow-covered mountains and one peak breaks into two summits which are exactly alike and resemble two crouching lions. Across the bay is a little Indian village, the buildings all pure white, which makes the town look very pretty across the water."

The air was fresh and bracing and it all looked like a new world. More wonders lay ahead and a long lifetime of being just as old as the great Dominion she was seeing in all its vastness, promise and beauty for the first time in that long-ago summer of 1887.

— Christopher Dafoe

NORTHCOTE

Paddlewheels and Glory on the Saskatchewan

By Robert Malcomson

The story of the steamboat *Northcote* began with the completion of the Northern Pacific Railway line from the Great Lakes at Duluth across Minnesota to Moorhead in 1873. Anticipating this accomplishment two years before, officials of the Hudson's Bay Company had decided to invest in the steamboat business owing to their knowledge that the new railhead on the Red River would be connected by a nearly uninterrupted water route to Company depots dotted across the western regions. That link would allow commerce to move to and from the East much more rapidly than it could be carried by York boats and carts for transhipment at York Factory.

The Company's initial step towards developing a more direct network to the East was to build a steamer for service on the Red River and Lake Winnipeg, which was accomplished on 7 May 1872 with the launch of the screw steamer *Chief Commissioner* (in honour of Donald A. Smith) at Lower Fort Garry. Lumber felled in Minnesota was among the first cargoes carried by this vessel as it chugged northward to the point where the Saskatchewan River empties into the northwest corner of Lake Winnipeg at Grand Rapids. At that place a second steamer was to be constructed that would serve the Saskatchewan above the nearly four-mile-long series of cascades that made navigation between the river and the lake impossible. A land carriage, which eventually featured a tramway, was also developed to transfer goods around the rapids.

Achievement of the scheme was not so simple, however. The second Company steamboat was completed early in 1873 and soon dispatched on its maiden voyage up the Saskatchewan. At the Demi-Charge Rapids, ten miles above Grand Rapids, the un-named and ill-starred vessel ran onto a rocky shoal, stoving in its hull so severely that, after being nursed back to Grand Rapids, it was declared unserviceable.

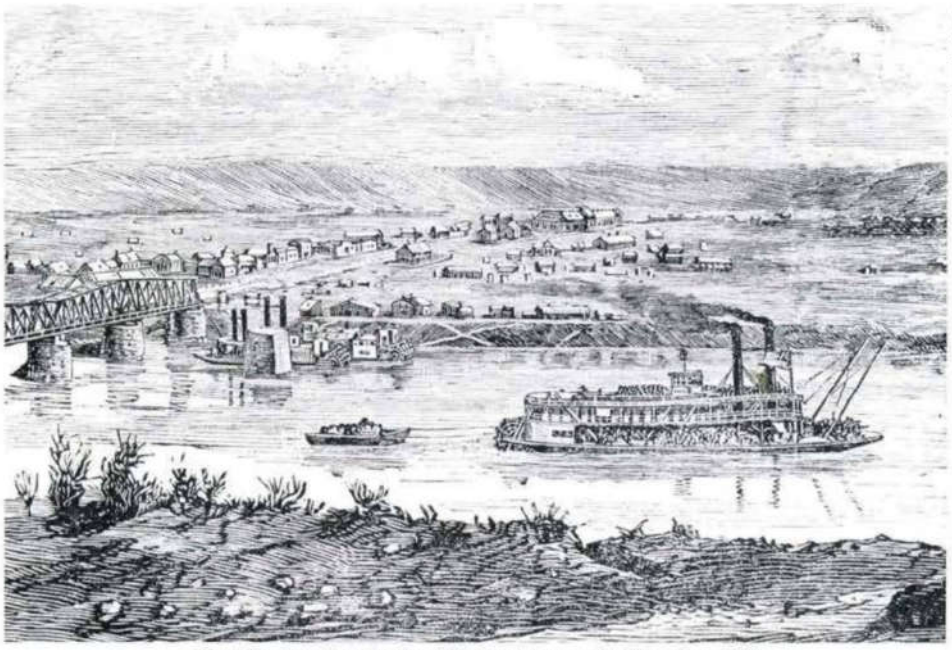
The demise of the Company's second steamboat was a harbinger of the many frustrations to navigation that would plague the early steamboats on the rivers of the Canadian prairies. During the 1870s and '80s, prior to the improvement of the channels along the Saskatchewan and its branches, the rivers were obstacle courses of bars, shoals and rapids, prone to surprisingly low volumes except after the spring melt-off or periods of heavy rain. One typical string of rapids was Cole's Falls, or La Colle Falls, where the water fell forty feet in elevation over a fourteen-mile distance. Along that route twenty separate sets of rapids were strung between barriers of boulders and gravel that squeezed channels around hairpin turns while the depth of water intermittently dipped to two feet or less. To operate successfully under such harrowing conditions, a prairie river boat had to be equipped with some special adaptations.

The second vessel constructed at the wharf above Grand Rapids was designed to meet the difficult challenges of the prairie rivers. Minnesota oak was the wood chosen to form a sturdy hull that measured 150 feet in length, 28.5 feet wide and four-and-a-half feet deep. The engines from its predecessor were installed and aligned with a stern paddlewheel that could be powered at 39.72 horsepower. In front of the engine house, the main deck could accommodate up to 150 tons of cargo, which would cause the boat to draw three-and-a-half feet of water. This draught could be reduced to a mere twenty-two inches if a lighter cargo was embarked. It was fully expected, however, that the vessel would run aground repeatedly, so lengthy hawsers were shipped for securing upsteam when it was appropriate for winching the boat through stubborn currents. On the foredeck were also mounted two sets of stout spars, resembling loading derricks, that were designed to be employed like crutches when the vessel had run firmly aground. The outboard segment of each set of spars would be stuck into the sandbar, the entire craft hoisted upward by means of a steam-powered winch pulling against the leverage provided by these

"deadmen". The paddlewheel was then revved up, causing the boat to lurch up and over its obstacle. Again and again the procedure would be repeated, as the steamboat literally pushed itself forward until the obstacle had been surmounted and deeper water gained. With these features, plus an upper "hurricane" deck lined with crew cabins and topped by a pilot house, the Company's second Saskatchewan River steamboat was launched at Grand Rapids on 1 August 1874 and christened the *Northcote,* in recognition of Sir Stafford Northcote who had been HBC Governor since 1869.

With Captain Frank Aymond in command, the *Northcote* began its maiden voyage during the third week of August and reached The Pas, 140 miles above Grand Rapids, on the twenty-sixth of the month. As it steamed into sight beneath a cloud of smoke and with its whistle screeching, the cattle grazing along the river were put to terrified flight and the local citizens flocked to the landing to see the "Leviathan" make its unprecedented arrival. Similar sensations were created when the *Northcote* made its appearance at La Corne four days later and then Carlton House soon after. That point, nearly 490 miles upriver from Grand Rapids, was reached in the amazing time of only twelve days. Owing to the fluctuations in the stage of the river, the return trip to Grand Rapids brought an end to the year's service and the *Northcote* was hauled ashore and battened down for the winter.

The navigation season of 1875 did not commence until 4 July when the *Northcote* departed for its first journey upriver with a cargo of 130 tons. The river was sufficiently deep to allow for an uneventful trip that ended on 22 July at Fort Edmonton. More than nine hundred miles had been covered in less than three weeks, confirming the wisdom of the Company's decision to employ steamboats in the place of the less efficient York boats. Piled high with furs, the *Northcote* returned to Grand Rapids again where it was kept waiting for a month until a new steamer, the *Colvile,* built to replace the *Chief Commissioner,* was able to deliver a load of provisions to the northern end of Lake Winnipeg. Due to a drop in water level the *Northcote* travelled only as far as Carlton on its next trip and subsequently spent the winter at that place.



Glenbow Archives

The "Northcote" on the South Saskatchewan at Medicine Hat, 1885.

Through the next eight seasons the *Northcote* continued to ferry loads on an irregular schedule controlled by conditions on the Saskatchewan. In 1876 it returned to Fort Edmonton late in spring and then was unable to travel above Cole's Falls after the final week of June. The next year six successful voyages were made upriver, most of them to Carlton House. That same season a second, smaller steamer, the *Lily*, was launched for use on the Saskatchewan and, due to a rise in the number of people flocking to the prairies, cabins and facilities to house fifty passengers were added to the *Northcote*. Low water levels greatly restricted travel

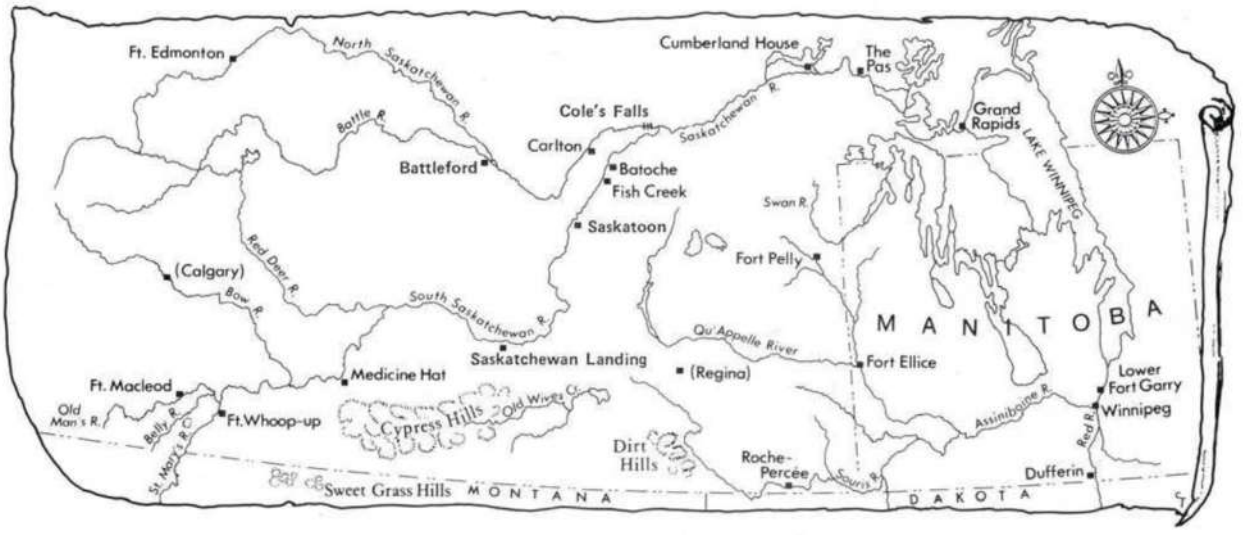
during 1878 and 1879, but heavy rains made 1880 a successful year, although the steamboat was restricted to mainly lower river destinations. During August of the following year the *Northcote* returned to Edmonton for the first time in several seasons and then carried the Governor General, the Marquis of Lorne, and his entourage between several stops during his Western tour.

In 1882 the *Northcote* and *Lily* were sold to the Winnipeg and Western Transportation Company, although the Hudson's Bay Company retained an interest in their operations. Three other large steamers were brought to the foot of Grand Rapids from Winnipeg and, through some extraordinary efforts, warped up the rapids for service on the Saskatchewan. The new arrangement was at first a very successful one as the steamboats of the W&WTC carried almost 1,500 tons of cargo upriver that year, the *Northcote* itself making three round trips to Fort Edmonton. After a less successful season the next year, the *Northcote* was offered up for sale in 1884. When no buyers surfaced, the officials of the W&WTC decided to operate the steamer on the South Saskatchewan River, but little more was accomplished than coaxing the boat to Medicine Hat by mid-summer where it was laid up.

With the future looking grim for the *Northcote*, 1885 dawned and brought with it the events that earned the steamer an unique place in the annals of Canadian history. The North-West rebellion reared up early in March, prompting the Canadian government to mobilize almost 5,000 troops under the direction of Major-General Frederick Middleton and to carry them with impressive speed by rail into the embattled district. When it was learned late in March that a Cree war party was threatening the *Northcote* and three smaller steamers belonging to the North Western Coal and Navigation Company at Medicine Hat, a police patrol was sent there to protect the vessels. The Cree threat came to nothing, however, and the police assisted Captain James Sheets in his efforts to launch the *Northcote*. Major-General Middleton wired the W&WTC for its assistance and a crew under Captain John Segers was soon sent by rail to operate the vessel. The coal steamers at Medicine Hat were also hired to provide support to the military.

It was intended that the riverboats would gather at Saskatchewan Landing in order to embark one division of Middleton's force under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel William Otter and hurry it down the river to a point from which Otter could make a quick march to defend the settlement at Battleford. Only the *Northcote*, towing two barges, was able to reach Saskatchewan Landing before Otter arrived. The colonel calculated that the single vessel was inadequate to ferry all his men and provisions so he crossed the river and headed overland to Battleford. In lieu of its original assignment, the steamer took on two companies of effectives, the Field Hospital corps, a load of materiel (including the famous Gatling gun), stores and forage and departed from the Crossing to carry them to General Middleton's division, which had encamped at Fish Creek, about fifteen miles upriver from Batoche, the rebel stronghold.

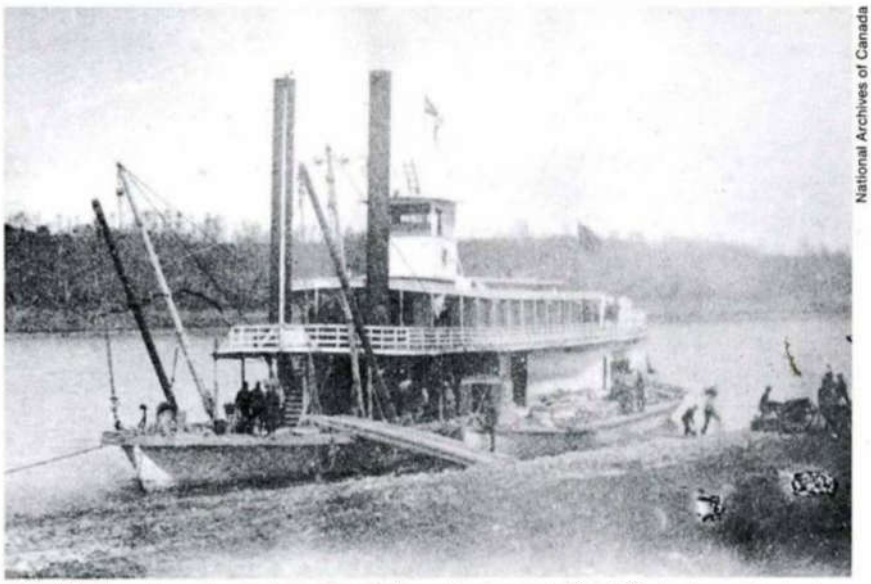
It was expected that the *Northcote* would reach Fish Creek in four or five days. Instead the journey took fourteen days, owing to the low stage of the South Saskatchewan; at one point both the steamer and its two barges had to be completely unloaded before they could be hauled over one set of obstinate shoals. Finally, on 5 May the *Northcote* arrived at Fish Creek and



Steamer "Northcote" at Fort Edmonton, 1875, from a new painting by Peter Rindlisbacher. (See special offer on page 48 of this issue.)

discharged its cargo and passengers. General Middleton was preparing his plans for an attack upon Batoche and, viewing the steamer as an asset that could put to advantage in his campaign, he ordered the vessel to be prepared for battle. After Middleton's force and the steamer moved downriver to Gabriel's Crossing, the farm belonging to rebel leader Gabriel Dumont was pillaged as a source of planking that was hammered in double thickness around the main deck of the vessel beginning on 7 May. Even a billiard table and washing machine found in Dumont's home were apparently added to the barricade. Additional bales and boxes were also stacked around the main and upper decks and mattresses put against the cabin windows in the effort to turn the *Northcote* into a makeshift gunboat. Major Henry Smith plus several other officers from the Infantry School (one of whom was Hugh John Macdonald, son of the prime minister) led thirty-one riflemen aboard the boat along with a doctor and medical corpsman, several men from the transport service, an aide-de-camp of Middleton's, a handful of settlers and a newspaper correspondent. Munitions, stores and fuel were loaded aboard the steamer and the two barges it would haul downstream. The pilots charged with steering the steamboat into action were Captains John Segers and James Sheets, experienced rivermen.

Shortly after dawn on 9 May Middleton's "ironclad" set out from Gabriel's Crossing with a fortified barge secured on each side. Its mission was to advance just beyond Batoche and provide a flanking diversion while the main force made a frontal assault upon the rebel stronghold. By 7:40 Segers and Sheets, assisted by the boat's purser, steered the *Northcote* to within two miles of Batoche at which point they sounded several blasts of the powerful whistle as a pre-arranged signal to General Middleton. Unfortunately the military had not moved as rapidly as had been expected and had not yet begun any threat to the enemy. Unaware of this delay, the *Northcote* continued on its way and began to undergo the most harrowing experience of its career. The Métis fighters supported by native allies had been expecting the arrival of the steamboat and, without the need to fight off an assault from



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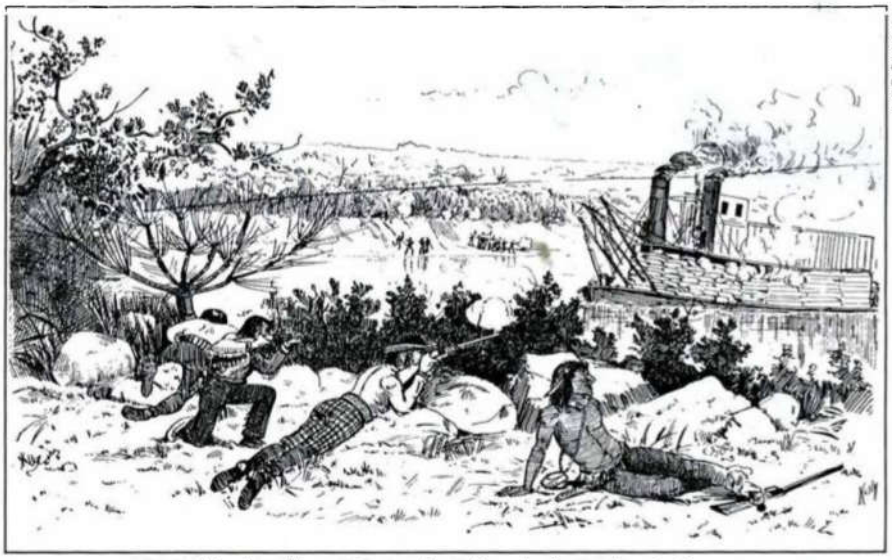
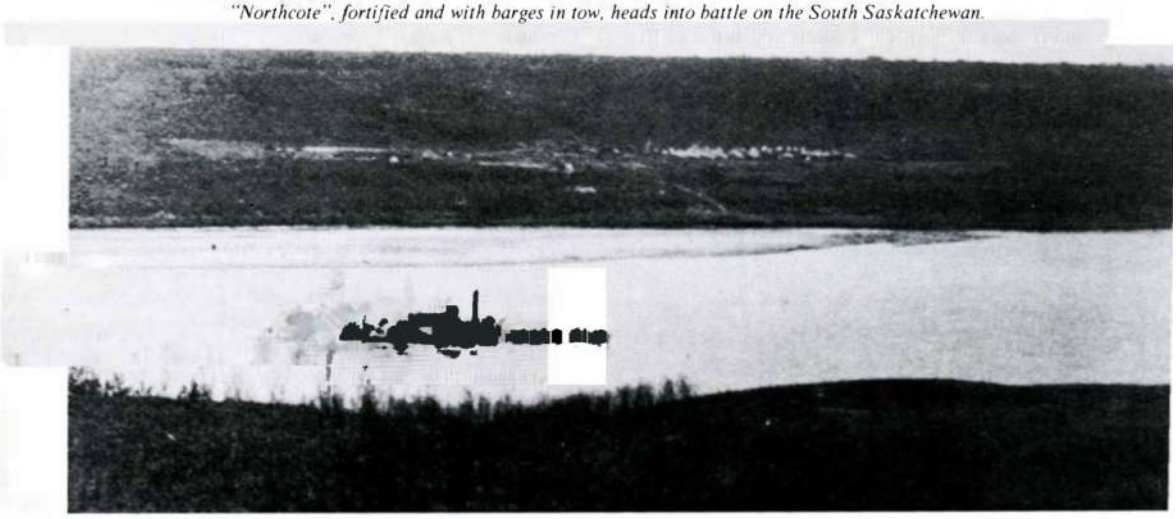
The "Northcote" was chartered to carry supplies and troops on the South Saskatchewan during the North-West Rebellion of 1885. The steamboat prepares to move on Batoche.

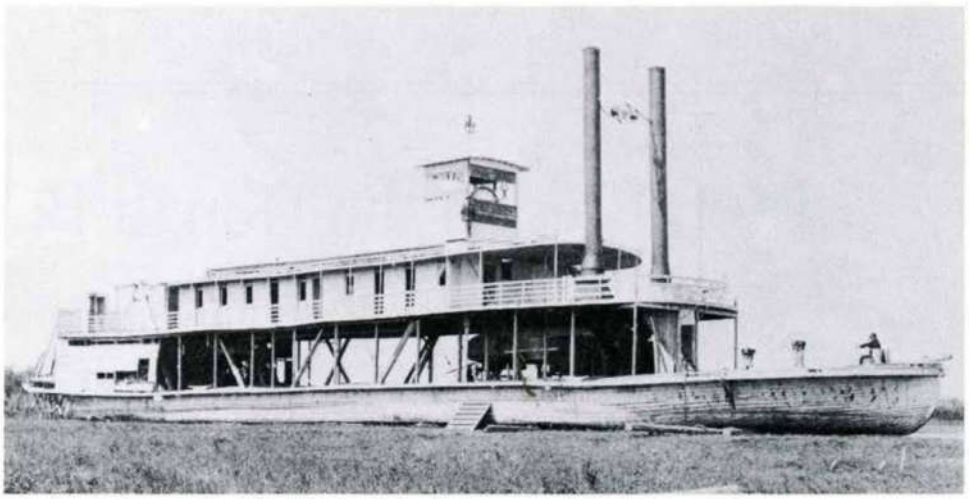


HBC Collection

"Northcote" runs the gauntlet at Batoche, from a drawing in "The Canadian Pictorial & Illustrated War News", 1885.

"Northcote", fortified and with barges in tow, heads into battle on the South Saskatchewan.




HBC

"Northcote", her great days behind her, beached and rotting at Cumberland House, 1894.

Middleton's brigade, they were able to concentrate their attention on impeding the vessel's progress. Like hail, bullets tore into the barricades, fired from sharpshooters concealed among the bushes, trees and buildings that lined the steep banks of the river. Major Smith's men returned the fire, but little could be done to protect the three men in the pilot house, which, it soon became obvious, had not been properly armoured and was soon pierced through with shots.

The rebels had prepared more than just a fusilade for Middleton's gunboat, however. A ferry traversed the South Saskatchewan at Batoche, guided by cables strung between the lofty banks of the river. Gabriel Dumont gave the command for these cables to be lowered as the *Northcote* went by in order to snag the steamer and damage it sufficiently to stop it. The first of these cables missed its target, but the second one caught the smokestacks, pulling them over onto the hurricane deck, as well as knocking down the foredeck spars and upsetting the whistle. Sparks flew from the dislocated stacks, adding the danger of fire to the confusion created by the volleys of gunfire that poured into the boat. The *Northcote* began to go out of control, its engines weakened by the loss of steam pressure caused when the damaged funnels no longer maintained the updrafts that kept the boiler fires going at peak efficiency. Captains Seger and Sheets allowed the riverboat to drift with the current downstream where they were finally able to anchor three miles below Batoche. Major Smith wanted them to turn around and head back up to the position Middleton had assigned, but the rivermen flatly refused, considering themselves very lucky to have survived their passage. Smith ordered the wheelhouse reinforced with lumber, but snipers on the shore chased the men under cover, wounding one of them in the heel. Finally, two deckhands were bribed with the promise of fifty dollars each if they would set up the whistle again so that Middleton could be signalled. This task was managed, the signal given and the *Northcote*'s direct involvement in the fighting ended.

The next day, after a debate about utilizing the steamer in the offensive operations, it was decided that the *Northcote* should cruise down to Hudson's Bay Crossing in order to discharge its barges. In company with another riverboat, it returned to Batoche on the evening of 12 May to discover that a decisive battle had been fought and won by Middleton's force. A number of wounded men were embarked and delivered to Saskatoon on 14 May. Five days later the *Northcote* returned to Saskatoon carrying rebel leader Louis Riel under close guard. He remained aboard overnight before being taken by trail to Regina.

Within a month the *Northcote* was back in commercial service, although mechanical failures marred its operation. One trip was made to Edmonton during the season of 1885 when the steamer arrived late in July to pick up troops who had been garrisoned there. Fittingly, as the *Northcote* departed residents lined the bank cheering the boat and its passengers, even offering a salute from the Hudson's Bay Company's little four-pounder cannon. It was to be the final tribute for the steamboat that had fought the river for ten years. As winter approached the *Northcote* was beached at Cumberland House. When navigation opened the next year the boat was left high and dry, its working days over. For the better part of two decades the pioneer Saskatchewan steamboat slowly rotted away on the bank. In 1904, its glory days forgotten, the *Northcote* was set afire and destroyed in order to relieve the locals of a useless eyesore. ♦

Robert Malcomson is a writer from St. Catharines, Ontario and co-author of "HMS Detroit: The Battle for Lake Erie."

To own a quality reproduction of Peter Rindlisbacher's painting of the steamer "Northcote" at Fort Edmonton, see the special offer on page 48 of this issue.

'Men Bred in the Rough Bounds'

The Scottish Military Tradition in Canada

By Ian McCulloch

Regiments bearing Scottish names, their ranks filled with men wearing the "bonnet, kilt, and feather", have played an important part in Canadian military history. Some fought as Scots in the British army with Wolfe, Amherst and Carleton through the 1750s to the American Revolution, others as Scottish-Canadians in defence of their country at home or overseas.

Disbanded Highland soldiers settled in Canada over two hundred years ago starting a military tradition founded on the strengths of their Scottish heritage: bravery, devotion, and fortitude in distress. Today, according to Statistics Canada, there are over two million Canadians of Scottish descent.

The Scottish military tradition is generally associated with the Highlands, home of the clans, where a tribal feudalism akin to that of our Canadian aboriginal peoples flourished with its own hierarchy of chieftains. Highlanders were "men bred in the rough bounds", living off the fish they caught in the lochs, the deer they hunted in the hills, and the herds they tended to in strachan and glen or raided from their Lowland neighbours. They had all the attributes needed to make good soldiers: courage, endurance, self-reliance and above all loyalty to one's leader and one's comrades.

> *Men bred in the rough bounds,*
> *the host that is trustworthy . . .*
> *Men of elan and mettle*
> *with blue blade in pommel . . .*
> *Descendants of noble clans,*
> *begotten of north men,*
> *'twas their instinct in every action*
> *to advance . . .*
>
> **— Duncan Ban Macintyre, 1725.**

In 1725, acting on the age-old adage that "it takes a thief to catch a thief", the British government raised a number of independent kilted companies to keep watch on the Highland clans and discourage their inbred proclivity for reiving each other's cattle. Clad in a black, green and blue government tartan, they became known as The *Freiceadan Dubh,* or "The Black Watch". Several years later, as a move to counter the growing tide of Jacobitism in the Highlands, a suggestion was made that the government should consider raising several regiments of Highlanders commanded by English or Scottish officers of "undoubted loyalty" and officered by chiefs and chieftains of "disaffected clans". Lord Duncan Forbes of Culloden wrote:

> . . . If Government pre-engage the Highlanders in the manner I propose, they will not only serve well against the enemy abroad, but will be hostages for the good behaviour of their relatives at home, and I am persuaded it will be absolutely impossible to raise a rebellion in the Highlands.

Initially, Forbes' advice was only followed in part. One regiment was formed, and this by bringing together the scattered independent companies of "The Watch" to form the 43rd Regiment (it was later renumbered the 42nd in 1749). They fought bravely at Fontenoy on the continent and during the "Forty-Five" Rebellion (sagely foreseen by Forbes) remained in southern England awaiting further service overseas.

On the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1755, William Pitt adopted Forbes' ideas with enthusiasm, leading to a policy which drained the Highlands of its best men to fight England's wars in Europe and North America. During this period no fewer than ten line regiments were raised, two of which, in addition to The Black Watch, served in North America. They were Montgomery's Highlanders (77th Foot) and Fraser's Highlanders (78th).

All three regiments made their mark in the year 1758, but in three very different theatres of operation:

Calgary Herald photo

Queen Elizabeth II, Colonel-in-Chief of The Calgary Highlanders, inspects the troops in the company of Lieutenant-Colonel Alan G. Maitland on the occasion of the presentation of new colours, June 1990.

The Black Watch in their heroic but futile storm assaults upon the *abatis* before Fort Ticonderoga; Montgomery's Highlanders in forming the van of General Forbes' successful expedition that captured Fort Dusquesne (now Pittsburg); and Fraser's Highlanders by taking part in the siege and capture of Louisbourg. Of the three however, the 78th could rightfully claim to have been the first Highland Regiment to have ever fought in Canada.

In 1759, Fraser's Highlanders formed up on the left wing of James Wolfe's small army assembled on the Plains of Abraham and marched into Canadian history books. Their storm charge with claymores took them up to the very gates of Quebec. At the end of the war in 1763, the 77th and 78th were disbanded and every officer and man was offered a grant of land according to his rank. Thus the disbanded soldiery of these two units became the nucleus of the first non-French settlers in Quebec.

Between 1770 and 1815, some 150,000 Highland Scots came to Canada settling mainly in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Upper Canada. Most of them were displaced crofters from the western Highlands and islands of Scotland, victims of the Highland Clearances. They were almost exclusively Gaelic-speaking and many were Roman Catholics. For a time, Gaelic was the third most-spoken language in Canada.

When the first shots of the American Revolution rang out at Lexington in 1775, the British government once again turned to the Scots for help. More Scottish regiments were raised, including one in Canada. On 12 June 1775, General Thomas Gage issued orders to Lieutenant-Colonel Allan Maclean to raise a regiment consisting of two battalions, each of ten companies, to be clothed, armed and accoutred like The Black Watch and "to be called The Royal Highland Emigrants". The idea was that the "Emigrants" would find recruits amongst former soldier-settlers in Canada that had served in the 42nd, 77th, and 78th. As inducements to enlist, each man was promised further grants of land at the expiration of hostilities and one guinea levy-money on joining.

During the American invasion of Canada, the First Battalion, Royal Emigrants under Maclean played a key part during the siege of Quebec 1775-76, repulsing General Montgomery's attack on the city. The Second Battalion performed garrison duties throughout Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

Other Scottish settlers also served King George. A considerable number of Highlanders from Strathglass, Glen Urquhart and Glengarry had emigrated in 1773 to the Mohawk Valley and settled on the lands of Sir William Johnson, Superintendant of the Six Nations. His son was commissioned as a colonel when forced to flee his lands to Montreal. The Scottish tenantry that accompanied him were formed into a regiment of Loyalists under the name of The King's Royal Regiment of New York. The "Royal Yorkers", as they became known, saw action in 1776 when they defeated the Americans at Oriskany during the Saratoga campaign and later participated in several notable raids into their old neighbourhood, the Mohawk Valley. Like The Royal Highland Emigrants, the "Royal Yorkers" were given land grants, mostly in what are now Glengarry and Stormont counties of Ontario. Their memory is perpetuated to this day by The Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders, a Canadian militia regiment headquartered in Cornwall, Ontario.

The Scots who fought in the War of 1812 were predominantly the Highlanders that lived along the banks of the St. Lawrence from the Bay of Quinte on Lake Ontario right up to Cornwall. Though no Highlander unit in the strict sense of the word was raised, every militia unit along the river was very Scottish in character. A quick glance at the names commanding the county militia regiments is revealing: Lieutenant-Colonel Alex MacMillan of the 1st Glengarry; Lieutenant-Colonel Allan Macdonnell of Greenfield of the 2nd Glengarry; Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Fraser, 1st Dundas; Lieutenant-Colonel Allan MacLean, 1st Frontenac; Colonel John Ferguson, 1st Hastings; Lieutenant-Colonel Matthew Elliot, 1st Essex; Lieutenant-Colonel William Graham, 1st York; Colonel William Fraser, 1st Grenville; etc.

Following the War of 1812, a number of Scottish line regiments saw tours of garrison duty in Canada including The Royal Scots, The 71st Highland Light Infantry, The 70th Cameron Highlanders, the 78th Rosshire Buffs (later The Seaforth Highlanders), The 80th (Glasgow Lowland) and The 93rd Sutherland Highlanders. With the creation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, the days of British garrisons were numbered, and with the exceptions of Esquimalt and the Halifax Citadel, the last of the regiments were withdrawn by 1871.

After 1815, Scottish immigration to Canada increased in numbers and the pattern altered. Scots from Lowland areas joined Highlanders in coming to Canada. Some 170,000 Scots crossed the Atlantic between 1815 and 1870, roughly 14% of the total migration of this period. By 1850, however, most of the newcomers were settling in the United Canadas rather than the Maritimes. The 1871 census shows that 157 of every 1,000 Canadians were of Scottish origin ranging from 4.1% in Quebec to 33.7% in Nova Scotia.

It is no surprise then that when the British regiments left, volunteer militia units sprang up to fill the vacuum. The first kilted Highland unit to be established in Canada was, appropriately enough, in Nova Scotia in 1871: The 79th Colchester and Hants Highland Battalion of Infantry (later The Pictou Highlanders (1871) perpetuated today by The First Battalion, The Nova Scotia Highlanders. The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada rightfully claim to be the oldest Highland unit in Canada having been created in 1862 and are reflected as such in the army order of precedence. Bonnet, kilt and feather did not come until sometime later in The Black Watch, their own Regimental history admitting it was initially a light infantry unit that evolved into a "fusilier" unit by 1879. The former had flank companies dressed in

Officer, 84th Royal Highland Emigrants, circa 1778.

"The proper Position of a Soldier", a plate showing the stance and uniform of a Scottish soldier of 1757. From "The New Highland Military Discipline" by Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Grant of The Black Watch, 1757.

Officer, 71st Fraser Highlanders, circa 1776.

National Archives of Canada

Colonel the Honourable Simon Fraser of Lovat, who led his Highlanders at the siege of Louisbourg and on the Plains of Abraham, 1759.

An artist's reconstruction of the uniform of the 78th Regiment of Foot, Fraser's Highlanders (1757-1763) showing private, officer and sergeant.

Francis Back/David M. Stewart Museum

tartan trews, but it was only 10 May 1879, according to the Regimental historian, that the Black Watch's ancestor, "The Royal Scots Fusileers", became "truly Highland Scottish in character" with "all ranks wearing Highland doublets and trews". Four years later, the unit had been completely outfitted with kilts and in 1884 were renamed "The Royal Scots of Canada".

On the declaration of hostilities between Great Britain and Germany in August 1914, our Department of Militia and Defence, ignoring existing militia units and their traditions, enlisted men into a new series of numbered Canadian Expeditionary Force battalions. However, Canadian historian George Stanley has stated that ". . . several of the CEF battalions were given Scottish designations . . . almost as if Sir Sam Hughes and Sir Edward Kemp had read the words of Duncan Forbes of Culloden or those of William Pitt."

It is impossible to tell the complete story of the Canadian Scottish battalions in World War I, there-

fore let the tale of one suffice as representative of the rest. The officers and men of The Black Watch of Canada fought in three battalions that totalled overall 11,954 men, winning 26 battle honours. Of those who served, 2,163 were killed, 6,014 were wounded and 821 were decorated. Six were awarded the Victoria Cross.

The Canadian militia was reorganized after the war in 1919. No new regiments were raised, but many changed their names and were redesignated as Scottish units. In this way the 20th Regiment (1866) became The Lorne Rifles (Scottish) in 1931, then after a 1936 amalgamation with The Peel and Dufferin Regiment, The Lorne Scots as we know them today; The 21st (1885) became The Essex Scottish in 1927 (now The Essex and Kent Scottish); the 42nd became The Lanark and Renfrew Scottish in 1927; the 43rd (1881) became The Ottawa Highlanders in 1922 and in 1933 changed to The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa; the 50th (1913) and the 88th (1912) amalgamated to become

Present-day Quebecers impersonate the 78th Fraser Highlanders of the eighteenth century.

The Canadian Scottish in 1920; the 59th became The Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders in 1922; the 82nd became The Prince Edward Island Highlanders in 1922; and, the 103rd became The Calgary Highlanders in 1924. The Mississauga Regiment formed in 1920, lasted a whole year before becoming The Toronto Scottish in 1921.

When World War II broke out, the peacetime militia regiments were mobilized intact, contrary to the government policy of the previous war. The first blooding of Canadian Scottish units occurred in August 1942 when The Essex Scottish reinforced with a company of The Black Watch returned from the beaches of Dieppe with only two officers and forty-nine other ranks. The following year, The 48th Highlanders and The Seaforths of the 1st Canadian Division landed in Sicily and were later joined on the mainland by The Cape Breton Highlanders of 5th Armoured Division for the long, hard slog up the boot of Italy to the Po Valley. After their "D-Day Dodger" stint in Italy they rejoined their Canadian Scottish brethren with other Canadian divisions in Northwest Europe. George Stanley has written:

> When we read the battle honours of the Scottish regiments which formed part of the Canadian First Army, we read, in effect, the battle honours of all overseas regiments — Moro River, Ortona, Liri Valley, Hitler Line, Gothic Line, Coriano Ridge, Savic Crossing, Caen, Bourguebus Ridge, the Scheldt, Walcheren, Breskens Pocket, Hochwald, Zutphen, Kusten Canal, Apeldoorn. These and many other names are today part of Canada's military history, part of Canada's military tradition . . . [one] of which we can be proud.

The post-war period to the present day has seen many reorganizations and amalgamations of Scottish militia units, until now 16 only remain in the Canadian Army List. For a brief spell, The Black Watch were activated as a regular regiment with two battalions between 1953 and 1970. The battalions saw service in Korea, Germany with NATO forces, and on UN tours

Calgary Highlanders photo collection

Tipping his hat, Honorary Colonel of The Calgary Highlanders, former Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, takes the salute from the regiment at Bognor Regis, Sussex, November 1943.

to Cyprus. With the advent of Armed Forces unification and force reductions the two regular battalions were reduced to nil strength and removed from the Order of Battle in June 1970. The Third Battalion (Militia) resumed its designation as Canada's senior Highland regiment. One consolation is that the uniforms, equipment and traditions represented by The Black Watch's pipe bands have been inherited gladly by The Royal Canadian Regiment.

The Scottish military tradition lives on in Canada, perpetuated primarily by the militia, and will continue to do so, until we fail to be moved by the pibroch played annually by the Governor-General's piper at the War Memorial in Confederation Square. The significant contributions made by the Scots, not only to our military history, but to all facets of Canadian life, are an integral part of our heritage. The words of Scottish professor Doctor Blackie voiced in 1900 have a special message for us all, whether sons and daughters of "auld Caledonia" or no:

> The greatest misfortune that can happen to any people is to have no noble deeds and no heroic personalities to look back to: for as a wise Present is the seed of a fruitful Future, so a great Past is a seed of a hopeful Present. ♦

Lieutenant-Colonel Ian McCulloch is the Commanding Officer of the First Battalion, The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada in Montreal, Quebec.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Left, Right Or Down The Middle?

By Frederick A. de Luna

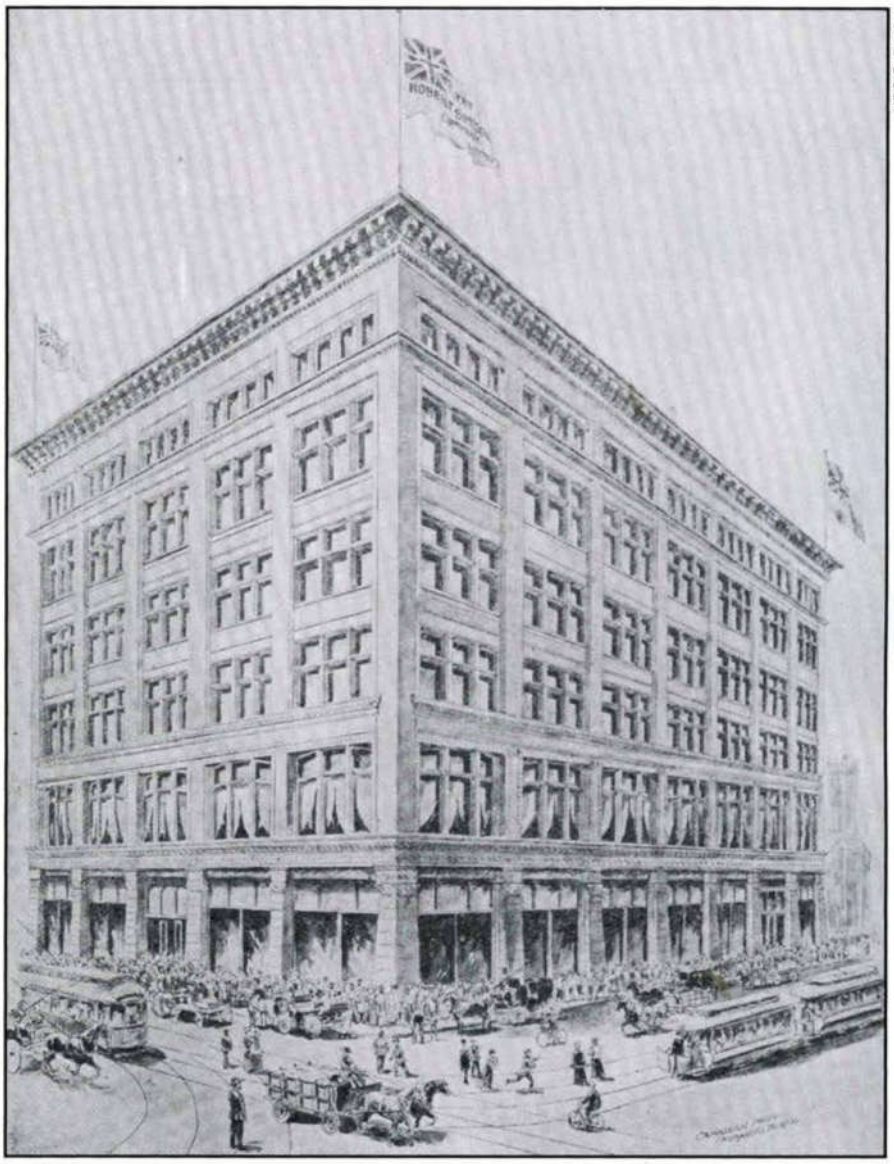
As the Automobile Age begins its second century in North America this year, ponder this question: Why do we drive on the right in Canada while everywhere else in the Commonwealth they drive on the left?

The first Duryea one-cylinder car put-putted its way into history on 21 September 1893, and by 1898 there were five automobiles in Canada. There were then of course no freeways, but neither were there traffic lights, speed limits, nor even any centre lines. And yet there was already in place the basic rule of the road in Canada: keep to the right.

In Great Britain, vehicles had kept to the left from time immemorial, and automobile traffic followed suit. Yet the prevailing rule on the continent of Europe when the automobile appeared was already keep right, as it was in the United States. "Oh, then Canada must simply have followed the lead of the Americans," comes the easy explanation, and that is indeed part, though a surprisingly small one, of a fascinating and uniquely Canadian story.

This argument for American influence also begs the question, however, for why does not traffic in the United States, which began as English colonies, keep to the left? Then it must have been the American Revolution, eh? Another reasonable guess, but still no cigar. Although the problem is essentially historical, the amazing fact is that neither academic historians nor encyclopedias offer any explanation for the origins of the basic rule that every driver must follow every time he or she ventures on any road.

There is, however, a tenacious British legend that neatly accounts for the differences: it was all the fault of the American and French revolutions. This legend gained new respectability a few years ago in a British magazine of popular science, *The New Scientist*. According to an article by Mick Hamer, the keep-left rule was traditional throughout Europe since medieval



HBC Collection

Traffic moves in an orderly way on the streets outside Robert Simpson's Toronto department store in 1899, living up to the Victorian city's reputation as "Toronto the Good".

times, when knights rode on the left to keep their sword arms free. But the common folk warily walked on the right to avoid their mounted and carriage-riding betters. Then, so the story goes, the French Revolution of 1789 changed all that: in the new age of equality, a law introduced by Robespierre required all vehicles to keep to the right, and Napoleon Bonaparte's armies then spread this rule to most of Europe. But proud Britannia, never enslaved by the Corsican, held fast to its aristocratic custom of keeping to the left.

A nice story, but much of it is only myth, according to the more serious research of an Australian legal historian, Peter Kincaid. Armed knights did ride on the left, but there was no such universal rule before 1789. Instead, practice varied in Europe according to the local prevalence of vehicles; carts kept to the right but coaches kept left. Long before the French Revolution, Kincaid argues in his 1986 study, *The Rule of the Road,* custom had hardened into rules requiring all vehicles to keep to one side of the road in order to avoid accidents. In most of continental Europe, including France, the rule was keep right, while in Great Britain and parts of the continent the rule was keep left. In short, the French Revolution brought about no change in the rule of the road.

As for North America, the traditional English rule was introduced into some colonies, but Kincaid found no evidence that it was ever universal in all of them. Although he is uncertain about the smaller French colonies, it is clear that France did introduce her traditional keep-right rule in Quebec. In a book published in Quebec City in 1775, François Cugnet cited intendants' decrees starting in 1709 requiring vehicles to

take the right side of the road to avoid both quarrels and "troublesome accidents."

Of crucial importance for the future of Canada is the fact that even after the British conquest of 1760 the French rule of the road remained in force in Quebec. This was one result of the Quebec Act of 1774, which provided for the maintenance of French civil law.

Contrary to the myth, Kincaid found no evidence that the American Revolution brought any change to the rule of the road. In some colonies keeping to the right seems to have been prevalent from the beginning, and a law of 1792 in Pennsylvania required traffic on its first turnpike road to keep to the right. New York adopted such a rule for all its roads in 1804, as did New Jersey in 1813. But the great inter-state National Road built starting in 1806 had a keep-left rule that was still in force as late as 1848.

After the American Revolution, the British Atlantic colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland retained the traditional rule of keeping to the left, despite the influx

On the few trails that existed, much use was made of the pack-horse, which typically was led on the right by a man walking on the left side of the horse. And when crude "corduroy" roads appeared, it was prudent for drivers seated on the right to stay on that side of the road where they had a better chance to keep wheels from running off the edges into swamps. Still another factor was undoubtedly the influence of the Conestoga wagon.

Introduced in Pennsylvania around 1750 and widely used thereafter, the Conestoga wagon is credited by American historians with having brought about the rule of keeping to the right in many states. The reason was that whereas drivers of coaches sat on the right, the huge Conestogas, pulled by a double train of horses, were driven by teamsters who were always on the left, walking or astride the near wheelhorse. To insure a clear view of the road, these wagons always kept to the right, and this practice was taken up by other drivers who found it easier to follow suit in the tracks made by the Conestogas' wide wheels.

Government Street, Victoria, late nineteenth century. Some drivers are clearly attempting to keep left, while others stick to the centre of the roadway. One driver, possibly an American tourist, attempts to enter the right lane.

of United Empire Loyalists. Once again, the crucial colony was Quebec. When that huge colony was divided into two provinces in 1791, there was no change in the new Lower Canada, where French civil law remained in force, including the rule of keeping to the right. But what about Upper Canada, the future Ontario? Kincaid argues simply that even though French civil law was replaced by British common law there the keep-right rule of the road was too well established to change. Although there is no evidence of any attempt to introduce the British rule, other factors must have played a role. Most important is the fact that there were virtually no roads to speak of then in Upper Canada, the sparse population relying mainly on water transportation.

The same considerations must have been at work in Upper Canada, for many Loyalists and "late Loyalists" travelled there from New York and Pennsylvania in Conestoga wagons. At any rate, by 1806 the keep-right rule was well-established, as noted by a British visitor, John Lambert, in a widely-read account: "In Canada, as well as in some parts of the United States, it is a custom among the people to drive to the right side of the road, which to the eye of an Englishman has a very awkward appearance."

By the mid-nineteenth century, still another complication in the rule of the road for the future Dominion of Canada emerged with the creation of new British colonies on the Pacific Coast. In Vancouver Island in 1849 as well as in mainland New Caledonia, which

Yarmouth County Museum

Every carriage and cart was where it should be (on the left) as citizens of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, turned out to welcome the vice-regal couple, Lord and Lady Aberdeen, in 1894.

were united as British Columbia in 1866, the traditional British rule of keeping to the left was introduced from the beginning, and given new force by the British Highway Act of 1835.

Confederation in 1867 brought Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into political but not traffic union with Quebec and Ontario, for the two Maritime provinces retained the rule of keeping to the left on their roads while their larger neighbours kept to the right. And when British Columbia and Prince Edward Island entered Confederation in 1871 and 1873, respectively, these provinces too remained committed to the traditional British custom of driving on the left.

The story for the prairie provinces is another example of the dominant influence of Upper Canada. In the vast expanse of Rupert's Land there were few settlers and fewer roads, and when new provinces were carved out of these territories they followed the rule of Quebec and Ontario: keep to the right. One of the first laws adopted by the new Manitoba legislature in 1871, the Travellers' Act, declared:

> Any person riding or driving; any driver of any vehicle, cattle, horses, mules, or oxen, who shall meet on the public Highway any driver of other vehicles or other animals coming in a contrary direction, shall direct his vehicle or animals on the right hand side of the road in such a manner as to leave the one half of the road to the party he so meets.

When the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were created in 1905, they too adopted the rule of driving to the right. Thus, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the Dominion of Canada was unusual among the countries of the world in having two different rules of the road in its various provinces: in old Canada and the prairies, keep to the right; in the Maritimes and British Columbia, keep to the left.

What finally brought about a single rule for all of Canada was the influence of the automobile. Even then, it was not until the 1920s that the left-side provinces finally came to their right senses, so to speak. The shift was particularly dramatic in British Columbia, where increasing numbers of automobile tourists from Alberta and the state of Washington were confused by the B.C. rule. In 1913, when there were 7,000 cars in B.C., the *Daily Province* quoted an official on the problem: "Many accidents in Vancouver especially . . . happen because a driver from Washington or the east instinctively turns to the right when unexpectedly confronted with another vehicle."

A lively debate consumed British Columbia for years, some conservatives arguing that it would be disloyal to abandon the British tradition. As one letter published by the *Victoria Colonist* in 1917 suggested, "it may not be a bad thing" for Americans "to learn when they cross the line that they are no longer in the United States, and that they are under the Union Jack and

that the British Columbia rule of the road is that of England." But by 1919 the advocates of change had won.

Acknowledging that "the conflict in the rule of the road as between British Columbia and the contiguous Provinces and States constitutes a serious menace to life and property," the provincial Legislative Assembly on 5 March 1919 unanimously approved the shift from left to right.

Even so, it was several more years before the change could be implemented, and then it was done in two stages. The chief obstacle was no longer the conservative attitudes of drivers, but the cost of conversion of the trolleys in Victoria and Vancouver. Taxpayers resisted the demand of the British Columbia Electric Railway Company that the government pay the $1,000,000 required to modify the streetcars and lines. Although the *Colonist*'s plea for a referendum went unheeded, the government finally agreed to pay $196,000 to the company, but the extra time needed for the conversion resulted in the two-stage implementation. On 15 July 1920 the interior regions made the changeover, and finally, on 1 January 1922, Victoria (together with the rest of the island) and Vancouver followed. Amazingly, despite the New Year's Eve celebrations, the shift was accomplished in both cities without causing a single accident.

This change from left to right in British Columbia was the first in Canada, and according to Kincaid was "apparently the first in any highly developed country anywhere." The three Maritime provinces soon followed the example of B.C., and for similar reasons. On 18 March 1918, the Minister for Highways in New Brunswick presented a petition signed by 1,326 citizens of St. John asking for a change because the keep to the left rule "is the cause of many accidents on our highways, and results in great confusion to visitors to our Province," in particular American tourists.

The opponents of change won the initial debate that evening, partly with the argument that they should wait to see what Nova Scotia would do. But a month later, after another debate, the legislature voted in favour of the change, 23 to 19. Thus, New Brunswick was actually the first among the left rule provinces formally to favour the change, even though British Columbia implemented it earlier. In New Brunswick, the change went into effect on 1 December 1922. Once New Brunswick had taken the plunge, Nova Scotia followed quickly. A bill to make the change was introduced on 6 March 1923, was passed on 6 April and implemented only nine days thereafter, on 15 April 1923. Although, as in British Columbia, not a single accident was reported on the first day resulting from the changeover, the government took an unusual precaution. Because of the suddenness of the change, all motorists in Nova Scotia were required for two months thereafter to display on their windshields a government-issued sign saying, "Keep to the Right".

The story of the change in Prince Edward Island had some unique twists. Feeling little need to accommodate many tourists, the government there had actually banned the automobile from 1908 to 1913. It partially relented that year, permitting motorists on its roads only on three days of the week: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. That restriction was not eliminated until 1917, after the advantages of motor truck transport had become obvious. And one year after the change in Nova Scotia, P.E.I. also shifted over on 1 May 1924, the last of the provinces then in the Dominion to do so.

The story for Newfoundland also is unique. There the change in the rule of the road preceded rather than followed its entry into Confederation in 1949, but only by a few years. The initial decision was taken in December 1945, not by the legislature, but by the then-ruling British Commission of Government. The reasons for the change are not clear, but among them were apparently the influence of the American bases on the island since 1941, the feeling of its inevitability, and perhaps British pressure in favour of confederation. The new regulations were formally introduced in February 1946 and implemented on 2 January 1947. And yes, there was one other difference: by the middle of the first day there was one accident.

Thus when Newfoundland entered Confederation in 1949 it only confirmed the uniformity that already existed throughout the Dominion. Britannia had never ruled the roads of Canada, except on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and now all those bastions were gone. The Canadian rule of the road originated not in Westminster, but in New France. Montcalm had conquered at last, "from sea to sea". ♦

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LOST HONOUR

The very strange story of the Canada Medal

By Hugh A. Halliday

At the outbreak of World War II there was some confusion as to what honours might be bestowed upon Canadian service personnel. A resolution of Canada's House of Commons, passed in 1919, had barred Canadians from accepting memberships in Orders of Chivalry. Thereafter the practice had been interrupted once — when Prime Minister R.B. Bennett arranged in 1934 for five Canadians to be knighted. British authorities understood the policy, but were unsure of how far it would extend. There was no question that gallantry awards, pure and simple, could be offered and accepted — the Victoria Cross, Military Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, Distinguished Flying Medal, etc. There was less certainty about the Distinguished Service Order, which was finally approved by Canadian authorities in November 1940. The Medal of the Order of the British Empire was similarly cleared as "politically acceptable" (in Canadian terms) in mid-1941.

What remained unclear was the status of honours granted within Orders which, at their highest levels, included titles (*i.e.* the Order of the British Empire which, at its highest plane, included two grades of knighthood). The issue of what was or was not acceptable was finally resolved when a Special Committee of the Canadian House of Commons ruled that "persons domiciled or ordinarily resident in Canada will henceforth again be eligible for the award of Honours and Decorations, including awards in the Orders of Chivalry, which do not involve titles". The way was thus cleared for receipt of all gallantry decorations plus Orders up to the level of Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB). Anything that bestowed a knightly "Sir" upon the recipient would be forbidden.

British officers were doubtless relieved when this diplomatic dilemma was resolved, but they remained apprehensive that Canadians might somehow seek awards on such a scale as to dilute the value of the honours. This fear was evident in a letter dated 1 November 1940 from Mr. C.G. White to Sir Robert Knox, KCVO, DSO:

> I understand from the Air Officer Commanding, RCAF in Great Britain, that he considered that awards to Canadians should for the present be on a generous scale in order to compensate for the dearth of awards for the last twenty years, during which an anti-award policy has been operative in Canada.

If British officers were worried that Canadians would somehow "swamp" the awards lists, Canadians seemed fearful that United Kingdom authorities would be niggardly in the granting of awards. These concerns seem to have been most pronounced with respect to honours for services performed in Canada itself. In June 1942 — about the same time as the House Committee was studying the acceptance of chivalry awards — word was circulating in Ottawa that distinctive Canadian decorations should be created, as well as a non-hereditary Canadian Order for meritorious service. This proposal coincided with the United States establishing its own Legion of Merit along lines defined earlier by France. The report of the House Committee itself recommended such action; one of its resolutions suggested:

> That His Majesty's Government in Canada consider a submission to His Majesty the King, of proposals for the establishment of an Order limited in number but not involving a title, for which His Majesty's subjects domiciled or ordinarily resident in Canada shall be eligible.

The views of RCAF officials are not known, but senior Canadian Army officers opposed creation of a

Canadian War Museum

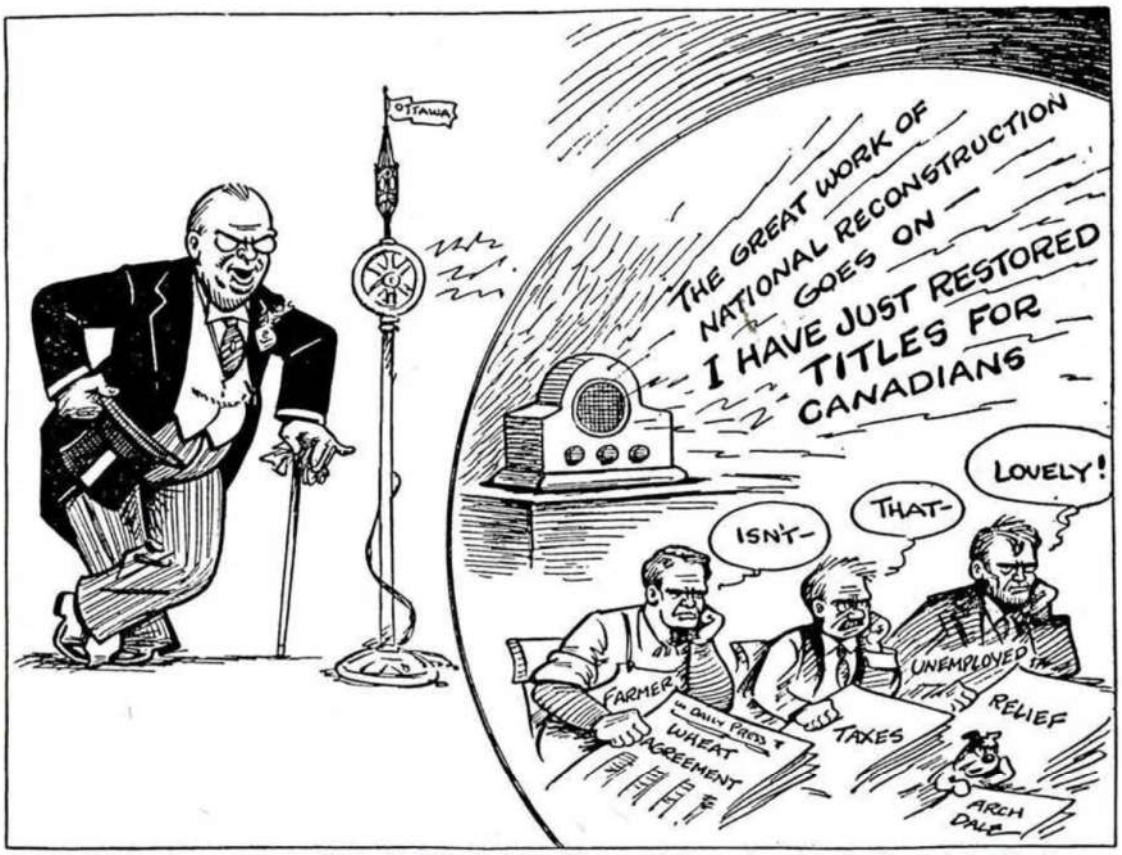
The Canada Medal, approved by King George, designed by the RCAF commercial art section and never awarded.

Canadian Order; they felt that existing British Chivalry awards were adequate. On the other hand, institution of a Canada Medal went forward. Mr. E.H. Coleman, Undersecretary of State, chaired an interdepartmental committee that defined the terms of the award and supervised design work which was undertaken by the RCAF's commercial art section. King George VI formally approved it, and its existence was publicly announced on 17 October 1943.

The appearance of the medal generated little enthusiasm in the midst of the war. News of it was relegated to the inside pages of the papers (an exception was the *Halifax Herald* which gave the story modest front-page coverage), and editorial reaction was uneven. The *Winnipeg Free Press*, for example, had nothing to say beyond publishing the Canadian Press despatches about the Canada Medal; the *Halifax Herald* also let the news pass without comment. That part of the press that noticed cautiously hailed the new honour. The *Ottawa Citizen* noted, "The respect with which the medal will come to be regarded will depend upon the choice of those selected for the honour." The *Globe and Mail* of Toronto was much more enthusiastic; under an editorial titled, "Canada's Order of Merit", it declared:

> This paper cordially commends the decision of the King Ministry to create, through the inauguration of the "Canada Medal", the first distinctly Canadian decoration for merit. The provision that it can be won by any citizen, soldier or civilian, in recognition of "meritorious service above and beyond the faithful performance of duty", indicates that the new order is modelled upon the British "Order of Merit", which now ranks as the most-prized honour in the gift of the Crown, and if a judicious process of selecting recipients of the Canada Medal is exercised, and it is not bestowed with too lavish freedom, it may come to be valued as highly as its British counterpart.

The paper went on to describe the Canada Medal as having a "firmly democratic flavour" and likely to "win the approval both of keen Imperialists and ardent



Canadians were not universally delighted in 1934 when Prime Minister R.B. Bennett brought back titles, as depicted in this Arch Dale cartoon from the "Winnipeg Free Press".

Canadian nationalists". On the latter point, the *Globe and Mail* declared:

> It should please the Imperialists, as it brings Canada a step further back into line with Britain in the bestowal of honours, and it should satisfy our nationalists because it emancipates us from total dependence upon the existing British orders and decorations. The assertion of our separate national individuality in this form is thoroughly justifiable.

French-language papers reacted in much the same vein. Indeed, *La Presse* in Montreal carried a favourable editorial in its issue of Monday 18 October, the day when news of the medal generally reached the public (most other papers needed a day to think it over). It, too, welcomed the honour as a national symbol while expressing the hope that it would not be awarded so generously as to sap its value as a measure of merit.

The Canada Medal was an attractive silver medal, with the sovereign's profile on one side and the Arms of Canada on the other. It was to be worn with a ribbon alternating red-white-red (much as our current flag appears). When the medal was worn, the ribbon would also carry a clasp inscribed "Merit" or "Merite" — presumably the recipient would choose the language of the clasp. Nevertheless, the Canada Medal was to be a fairly low-ranking honour; it would yield precedence to the British Empire Medal (BEM), although it would take precedence over Campaign Stars. A total of fourteen such medals were struck — seven with "Merit" clasps, seven with "Merite" clasps.

Throughout the forces, unit commanders were invited to recommend personnel for the Canada Medal; at least one RCAF file indicates that the regulations governing the medal had been circulated a month before the official announcement of the honour. Records dating from late 1943 and early 1944 contain several such recommendations, both at home and overseas. Nevertheless, no Canada Medal was ever awarded. Within the armed forces (whose commanders might have pressed the matter), the existing British hierarchy of honours were evidently deemed satisfactory, and Canadian nationalism was not strong enough to insist on distribution of Canada Medals. Of those who had been recommended, most appear to have received no honours at all; a few others were accorded Mentions in Despatches. An example is that of Flight Sergeant Harold W. Ridge of No. 407 Squadron, RCAF. On 19 November 1943 his commanding officer recom-

mended him for a Canada Medal; on 8 June 1944 he was Mentioned in Despatches. The recommendation for the Canada Medal is worth reading, as it demonstrates the sort of service for which the honour was envisaged:

> This non-commissioned officer has been on the squadron for the past two years and has been outstanding in his devotion to duty in all kinds of weather, etc. His untiring efforts to keep aircraft serviceable for operations has been an example to all other groundcrew personnel on the unit.

The creation of the Canada Medal had been announced with considerable fanfare; the fact that it was not being awarded took some time to register on the public consciousness. The reason that it was never issued was the prime minister himself. Incredible as it may seem, William Lyon Mackenzie King had evidently not been closely consulted or had chosen to ignore the process of creating a medal. On 29 October 1943, more than a week after creation of the Canada Medal had been announced, Undersecretary Coleman reviewed the award's guidelines with the Prime Minister. King was furious. In his diary he declared that the Canada Medal was unsuitable because it was aimed at those who had already received honours (*i.e.* the Governor General) — although the regulations that Coleman had drawn up suggest otherwise. In any case, King declared that he would assume no responsibility for recommending anyone for the Canada Medal and suggested withholding all awards until after the war. He repeated much the same to his Cabinet on 3 November, even stating that the Canada Medal had been "forced on the Cabinet" and was something that could only provoke public and Parliamentary opposition.

How King came to these conclusions is utterly baffling, given the regulations that had been compiled and the reaction of the press when the initial announcement was made. King claimed to feel that any honours system was riddled with hypocrisy and corruption, favouring some and by-passing other deserving folk. On 6 March 1946 he told his Cabinet (and recorded in his diary) that the matter of decorations and honours had caused him "more pain and anguish" than any other public issue. Although he considered a possible Canadian Order as preferable to British honours, he did not want his ministry associated with the establishment of such an Order; he was willing to leave that to his successors.

King's diary indicates some confusion as to honours in general and the Canada Medal in particular. Although he supposedly disliked the bestowal of honours on individuals (even when no titles were involved), he tolerated a system that involved British awards, presided over a patronage system that granted honours

National War Museum

Alexander Dunn won Canada's first Victoria Cross at the Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War. Mackenzie King thought of giving the Canada Medal to popular championship figure skater Barbara Ann Scott (below). Then he thought again.

National Archives of Canada

Prince Philip, still in the Royal Navy, had his medals on when he and Princess Elizabeth met Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent in 1951. The Canada Medal was not among them.

ranging from Senate seats to King's Counsel titles, and ultimately accepted a rare Order of Merit (OM) from the Crown. At times he wrote as though he had forgotten altogether the creation of the Canada Medal. At other times the prime minister considered awarding it to people he thought deserving — Generals H.D.G. Crerar and A.G.L. McNaughton in 1946, Barbara Ann Scott in 1948. In his private ruminations it is evident that he also misunderstood the nature of the medal. The 1943 regulations had ranked it very low in the hierarchy of awards — even the British Empire Medal took precedence over it — yet King seemed to view it as a major honour; its first award would (in his mind) be an event of great historic import — hence his indecision as to who should get it. King dithered on, and the Canada Medal faded in the minds of others.

On 24 January 1948 the *Montreal Standard* reported, "The Cabinet has abandoned plans to create a new and distinctively Canadian award, the so-called Canada Medal." Here was proof that some circles were oblivious to the existence of the medal — that it did not need to be created, only issued. On the other hand, on 28 January 1949 Austin F. Cross, writing in *Canada's Weekly,* reported that the Canada Medal might be revived. He noted:

> There has always been a certain amount of guessing on Parliament Hill as to the reason or reasons why the Canada Medal was ever conceived. There was quite a lot of fuss made about it at the time.

Nothing happened, however; the Canada Medal remained in limbo. Throughout the Korean War, for example, Canadian service personnel continued to receive British and Commonwealth honours for heroism in battle and distinguished services behind the lines.

On 16 June 1954, the non-appearance of the Canada Medal was broached in the House of Commons. The Member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings, George C. Nowlan, deplored the lack of means for recognition of civilians for services to the state. Nowlan vaguely recalled the prior existence of the Canada Medal, although he regretted the name itself:

> I must say that it is a rather forbidding and awesome sounding title, a rather metallic sound. It is reminiscent of the prize a farmer gets for exhibiting a bull at a fair. I believe we could have chosen a better title.

Nowlan recalled (erroneously) that the awarding of the Canada Medal had been cancelled immediately upon the government being faced with the first list of recommendations. The Secretary of State, Jack Pickersgill, was equally vague. He remembered the Canada Medal having been approved by the Crown and assumed that it still existed, in principle, as an award for services rendered to humanity or the state. In any case, he did not consider the matter to be his responsibility. The issue died after cursory discussion.

The Canada Medal was mentioned again in the House of Commons during the 1956 session. On 12 January 1956, the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable George Drew, referred sarcastically to the award as having been "lost", although he did not elaborate.

Lester B. Pearson and John Diefenbaker enjoy a joke with Mrs. Diefenbaker at Rideau Hall, Ottawa, 1958. Pearson, sporting his "gongs", was about to become leader of the Liberal Party. Diefenbaker had once favoured giving the Canada Medal for a wide range of achievements, including merit in the arts and sciences, but did not do so as prime minister. The Order of Canada was finally established under the Liberals in 1969.

Much more thorough discussion occurred on 4 July 1956, during study of the estimates for the Department of the Secretary of State. The Minister, the Honourable Roch Pinard, took more interest in the subject than had been shown by Mr. Pickersgill. The exchange was generated by remarks from John C. Pallett (Peel), urging in general terms that a system of recognizing services to the nation be established. He did not specify a hierarchy of medals, but the next speaker, John Diefenbaker (Prince Albert), was more pressing. He, too, recalled the institution of the Canada Medal, and its apparent disappearance into limbo. He urged that it be revived. In view of the modest status that had originally been planned for the medal (little more than a glorified Mention in Despatches), Mr. Diefenbaker envisaged the Canada Medal as being a fairly lofty distinction, to be awarded for achievements in the arts, literature and sciences as well as other walks of life. Similar views were expressed by J. Wilfred Dufresne (Quebec West), who thought that a writer like Roger Lemelin would be a deserving recipient of a national honour.

Nevertheless, the Canada Medal remained dormant. King had hesitated to award it because he distrusted honours and could not decide who should receive them when they were to be non-partisan. His successors appear to have been indifferent to the matter and unwilling to open public debate on them (perhaps fearful that discussions might be as emotional and unreasonable as those heard during the Flag Debate of 1964-65). Not until 1967 — Confederation Year — was the issue of distinctive Canadian honours raised again, and when that happened the old Canada Medal was simply by-passed; a more complete hierarchy of civil and military honours was created in 1969 including awards for public services (Order of Canada), military distinction (Order of Military Merit) and bravery (Cross of Valour, Star of Courage, Medal of Bravery). These covered a range of honourable achievements that the forgotten Canada Medal could not have encompassed. ◆

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THE STORY OF A SYMBOL

Golden Boy

By Hubert G. Mayes

If the figure on the summit of Manitoba's Legislative Building had been a woman, one can safely assume that it would not have been a naked runner holding a torch aloft with one arm and carrying a sheaf of wheat with the other. In the Winnipeg of 1915, where Victorian views concerning the unclothed female form still prevailed, the statue of a woman would no doubt have been modestly attired as a Greek or Roman matron. Standing serenely or seated in quiet composure, the embodiment of one of the virtues or some noble ideal, the figure would have surveyed the city and surrounding farm lands with an air of dignity and strength. Such a statue would have made a fine symbol for the province, and there is evidence that the architect who planned the sculpture did in fact envisage the statue originally as a woman. However, most people would probably agree that the decision to adopt the more dramatic and daring figure of a running boy was a happy one. In any case the Golden Boy has become a treasured part of Manitoba's artistic heritage and one of the best-known symbols in Canada.

The idea that ultimately took form as the Golden Boy originated in the mind of the English architect who designed the Legislative Building, Frank Worthington Simon. People seem to have been unaware of this fact until comparatively recent times. For example, an article in the *Winnipeg Tribune* of 16 August 1980 states that "Simon's design indicated a statue on top of the dome, but nothing in the available records shows whether he had anything particular in mind. A separate contest must have been held." In 1986 the book *Symbol in Stone*, Marilyn Baker's excellent history of the Legislative Building, appeared. In the Provincial Archives Dr. Baker had discovered correspondence between Simon and the French sculptor Georges Gardet pertaining to the figure on the dome, the two bronze bison flanking the grand staircase and the statues of Moses and Solon in the Legislative Chamber. In this exchange it is clear that while he may have been somewhat vague on the subject at the beginning, Simon came to have quite definite views about what form the statue for the dome should take.

In his letter to Gardet of 31 August 1915, Simon asks the sculptor to give him a price for a bronze figure to be placed on the dome. The figure could represent the success or progress of Manitoba, he says, or something else. "It's not necessary," he adds, "that it be a woman." The last sentence suggests strongly that in a previous letter (which is not in the file) Simon had mentioned the idea of a female figure.

On 22 February 1916 Simon wrote to Gardet from East Grinstead in Sussex in reply to a letter received from the sculptor a week earlier. It seems likely that in his letter Gardet had proposed a statue with "full size" and perhaps extended wings. Simon replies: "Instead of a winged figure on top of the dome, I have decided to have a figure along the lines of the Minerva [he means Mercury] of Giovanni di Bologna. I'm sending you a sketch." A copy of this sketch dated 9 March 1916 is in the archives file. It shows a running youth with small wings attached to his hat and shoes. The runner's right arm, extended very high, holds a lighted torch, and in the left hand there is a small cluster of grain stalks which Simon has labelled "wheat sheaf". The three-ton statue is to stand on a ball that will be made of cast bronze sections bolted together after the figure is in place. A solid steel shaft six inches in diameter extends from the runner's waist through his left leg to the anchoring point in the dome. Simon's letter continues with the statement that the statue should be in Winnipeg by April or May of 1917, and concludes: "Let's hope that the war will be over this year."

Gardet's reply of 27 February stresses that the question of solidity and resistance to the wind must be carefully studied. The steel armature (which Simon

Manitoba Archives

The Golden Boy runs north high above the Manitoba Legislative Building. Below, in the garden, is a bust of Sir George-Etienne Cartier, who was instrumental in bringing Manitoba into Confederation in 1870.

had specified must be 15 cm. in diameter) cannot be any bigger than 12 cm., he says, because the thickness of the bronze has to be taken into account, and he can't make a distorted leg in order to enclose the armature more easily. "Would it then be strong enough?" Gardet asks. "I'll make some enquiries of the metal-founder and his engineer." Gardet then quotes a price and says it should be possible to execute the casting by the spring of 1917, but he can't guarantee this because the war has created a scarcity of workers.

On 6 March Simon writes to say that he is anxious to hear the results of the consultation with the metal-founder and the engineer, adding that Winnipeg has rather violent storms from time to time. He concludes by expressing his profound admiration for the courage and spirit of the "admirables soldats français" at Verdun. In one of his letters Gardet writes for his part about the heroism of the Canadian soldiers in France. In passing, it is worth noting that although all this correspondence between the two men is taking place during a terrible world war, it seems to flow back and forth with surprising regularity and speed. It is also interesting that Simon, a former student of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, uses French exclusively in his letters to Gardet. One has to admire his refusal to worry unduly about problems of spelling and grammar,

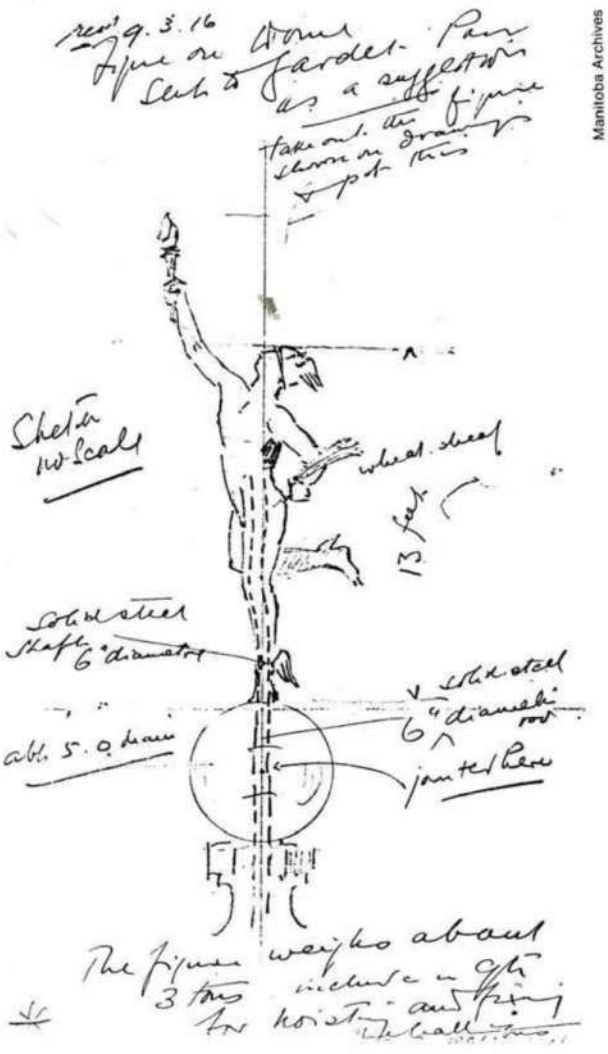
Manitoba Archives

The "figure du génie" in its final form, with its wheat sheaf and torch.

and the way in which he confidently addresses artistic and technical matters in the language of his French colleague.

On 14 March Gardet writes again. The founder says 12 cm. will be enough for the armature. "Nevertheless we'll make it 15 if possible, and I can cheat a little on the thickness of the leg." He also notes that he has eliminated the runner's wings. Finally, he sends a proposed contract that he had mentioned in an earlier letter. He had had trouble over the payment for his sculpture of an eagle for the Mexican Government, "but I know there's nothing similar to be feared with Canada." However, it's obvious that he thinks a formal contract would be a good idea.

Early in April Gardet says that he will soon send a photo of his model for what he calls the "figure du génie" (using *génie* in the sense of a mythical protective being), and informs the architect that he will soon be ready to start the full-scale figure. On 29 April he sends the promised photograph. "You'll see," he says, "that the lower part of the leg is already thicker to further facilitate the insertion of the armature. In spite of this, the armature could be only 12 centimetres thick and I can't make the ankle any thicker." He adds that if Simon still has fears about the solidity of the figure, he will design a statue standing on both legs. "I have made *génie* without wings," he concludes. "I don't think there is any reason to give him the attributes of Mercury."



Manitoba Archives

In this early sketch, the boy is seen with winged feet and a winged cap, like Mercury.

SIMON & BODDINGTON
ARCHITECTS

FRANK W. SIMON, F.R.I.B.A.
HENRY BODDINGTON JR.
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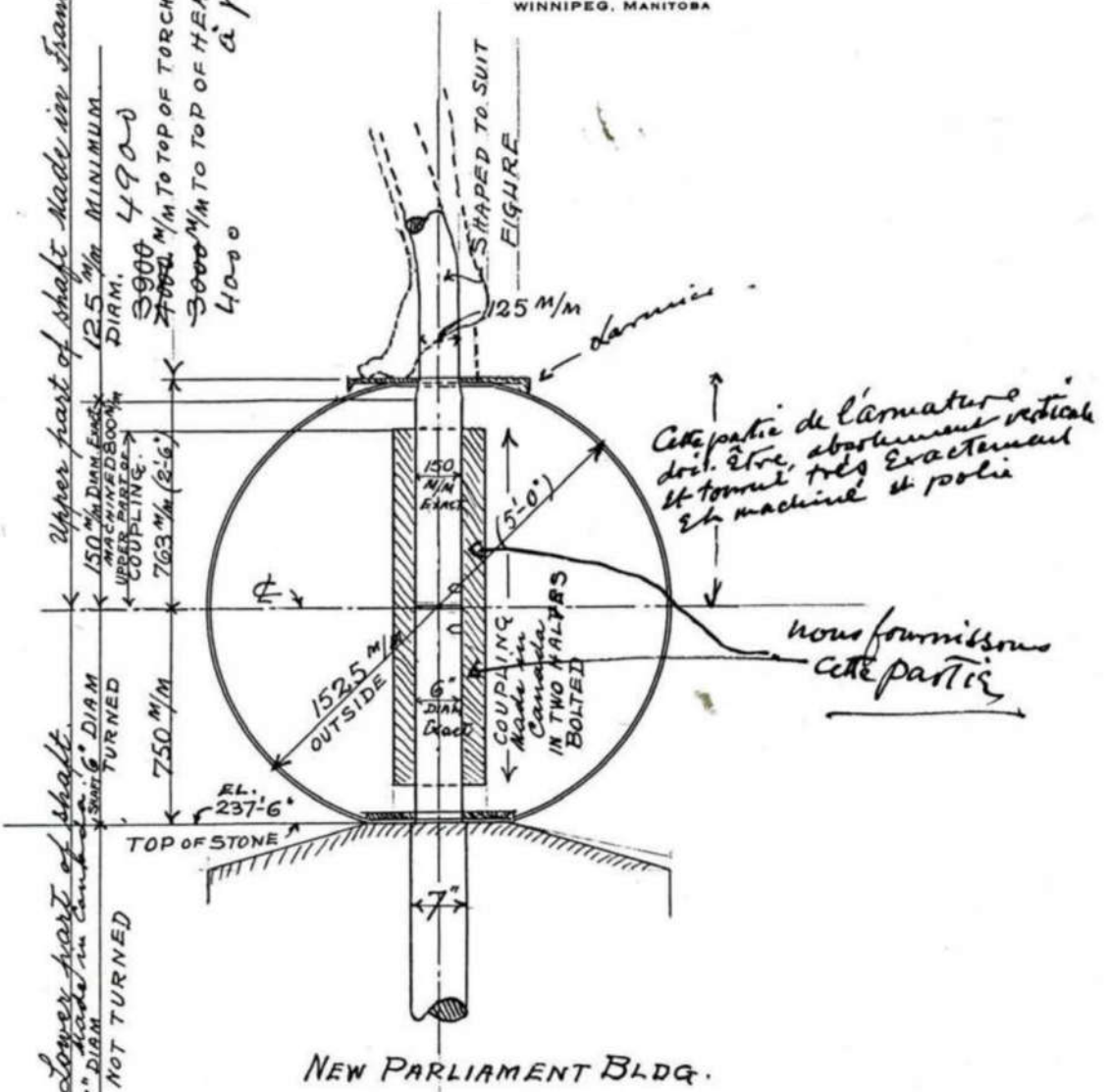
CABLE ADDRESS: "SIMON, WINNIPEG"
CODE: WESTERN UNION
TELEPHONE: MAIN 4362

23 June 1916

NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING
N. E. WING. GROUND FLOOR.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA


Upper part of shaft. Made in France
125 M/M MINIMUM DIAM.
3900
4000 M/M TO TOP OF TORCH. (about)
3000 M/M TO TOP OF HEAD (about)
à peu près
4000
SHAPED TO SUIT FIGURE
125 M/M
Aluminium
150 M/M DIAM. END MACHINED UPPER PART OF COUPLING.
763 M/M (2'-6")
Cette partie de l'armature doit être absolument verticale et tournée très exactement et machinée et polie
nous fournissons cette partie
150 M/M DIAM
5'-0"
1525 M/M OUTSIDE
6" DIAM Bolt
COUPLING Made in Canada IN TWO HALVES BOLTED
6" DIAM TURNED
750 M/M
EL. 237'-6"
TOP OF STONE
7"
Lower part of shaft. Made in Canada
SHAFT 7" DIAM NOT TURNED

NEW PARLIAMENT BLDG.
WINNIPEG.
SHAFT FOR BRONZE FIGURE
ON DOME

SCALE: 5 cm = 1 M. (1:20).

Frank W. Simon
23 June 1916
L. Bylander

See also Specification for steel shaft. 23 June 1916.

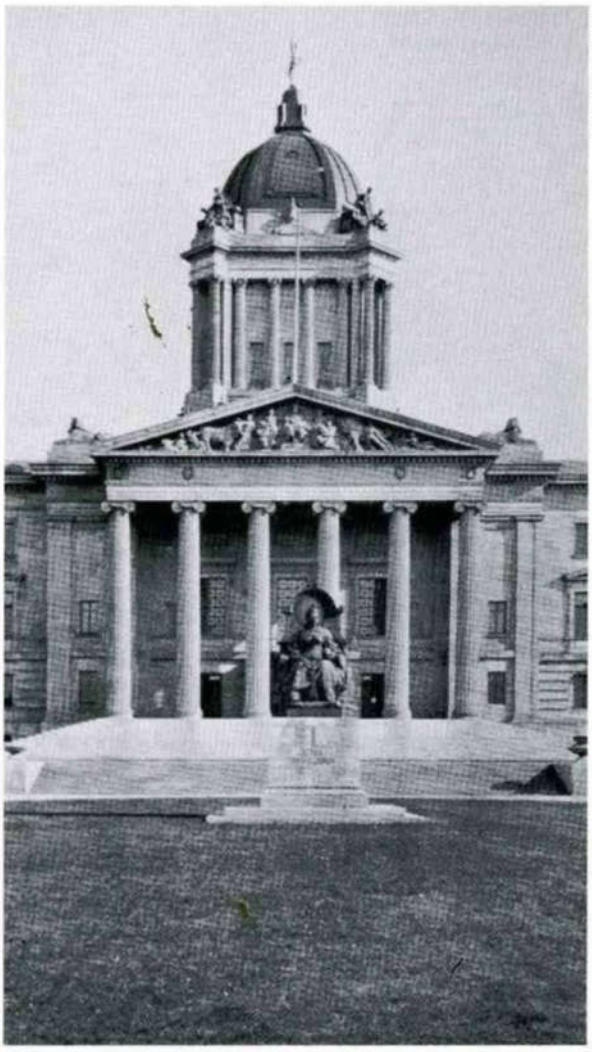
See letter of 8 Feb 1917

Bylander's detailed drawing of the mounting and anchoring of the boy.

Manitoba Archives

Manitoba Archives

The boy is raised into position, 21 November 1919.



Manitoba Archives

The Golden Boy looks down on the seated figure of Queen Victoria on the legislature lawn in front of the north entrance.

On 5 May Gardet writes that since Simon has accepted his model, he will start to work immediately to reproduce it in full scale. He accepts Simon's suggestions that the figure be brought slightly forward on the sphere and that the size of the torch be increased. With his letter of 22 May he sends a tracing of the design which he had sent to Sven Bylander, Simon's engineer. This sketch, though falling apart on the folds, has survived. It shows both front and side views, with the bent armature following the curve of the leg. In addition to the changes noted above, Simon's original design has been modified in several ways: the tilt of the head has been altered, the right arm carrying the torch is in a more natural position, the sheaf of wheat is much more substantial, and the hat is gone. The scale is also carefully indicated. Gardet says that the armature will be put into the mold before the metal is poured in order to make it of one piece with the bronze. There is some discussion of the sphere on which the figure will stand, followed by the information that he had tried a model of the *génie* standing on both legs, but "the silhouette is less effective: it looks flat seen in profile."

The next document of interest in the archives is a detailed scale drawing submitted by Mr. Bylander on 23 June 1916. This drawing, signed by both Simon and Bylander, shows how the steel shaft is to be attached, as well as which part is to be made in Canada and which part in France. This document was obviously sent to Gardet, as Simon's notations are in French. Leaving nothing to chance, he stresses that the upper part of the shaft must be absolutely vertical, turned exactly to specifications, machined and polished.

In his letter of 22 July Gardet states that he and his colleagues will follow Bylander's instructions in regard to the armature. He is looking for steel of the desired quality, but says that the supplier cannot guarantee delivery, and furthermore it would be very hard to have the armature machined, all lathes being required for the war. Perhaps the steel will have to be obtained from England. On 28 September he sends pictures of his model, one third the final size. One of his comments proves that he has not forgotten that the figure will be almost 250 feet above ground level: "The movement that you accepted has remained the same, but I have increased the volumes. The open air reduces shapes so drastically (*dévore tellement la forme*) that I was afraid that in making it too fine it might look thin from a distance and at the height where it will be placed." He adds that he also modified the head by returning to a type that was common in classical sculpture. The letter ends by lamenting the difficulty of obtaining even basic materials, but he takes courage from *les succès de nos admirables armées.*

Several more letters concerning the steel are exchanged. On 23 November Simon informs Gardet

Hubert G. Mayes photo

The Golden Boy, photographed by the author after a dangerous climb up the inside of the tower.

that it will be impossible to send steel from England: he will try the United States, but asks Gardet to do his best to get it in France. On the same day Gardet is writing to Simon that his full-scale figure is almost complete and that he will have it cast immediately. His letter of 27 December brings the discouraging news that his efforts to have the armature made in France have been fruitless: "no factory wants to undertake it, all production being directed towards the war." After giving the dimensions of the small platform on which the figure's foot will rest, he closes with the hope that "1917 will bring us a victorious peace that will allow you to finish your construction without further problems."

At this point the correspondence in the archives file comes to an end. One is left with a feeling of admiration, not only for the courtesy and mutual respect which the two men maintain throughout the series of letters, but also for the success of their collaboration in the face of many obstacles.

No doubt many letters were exchanged after the last one in the file, but it is uncertain whether they were preserved. In any case the figure was finally cast in the Barbidienne foundry early in 1918. Subsequently the foundry was struck by German bombs. Although severe damage was inflicted on the building, the bronze figure survived. He was loaded onto a cargo ship bound for North America, but before the vessel set out from Le Havre it was requisitioned for the transportation of troops. The ship crossed the Atlantic several times before the statue was finally unloaded in New York and sent by rail to Winnipeg, where it arrived in August of 1919. On 21 November of that year it was hoisted into position by a large crane. A fine picture taken at the time shows three brave men suspended in mid-air with the statue and three more men waiting to guide it through an opening in a frame and down into its permanent location. Floyd Buckham, a Winnipeg specialist in steel construction, had prepared the necessary scaffolding and was in charge of the hoisting operation.

Local newspapers apparently did not consider the event worthy of extensive coverage. On the following day, a short item in the *Winnipeg Tribune* bearing the headline "Bronze Figure Put on Parliament Dome" devotes most of its space to telling the now-familiar story of the statue's war-time peregrinations. It also claims that the figure is modelled on the two lines from "Flanders Field" (*sic*), the famous poem by Colonel John McRae:

> To you from failing hands we throw
> The torch; be yours to hold it high

When Simon made his first design in 1916, it is doubtful that he was familiar with John McCrae's poem,

published the previous year. In any event his inspiration — and McCrae's — went back to ancient Greece and the traditional image of the runner carrying a torch.

The statue, which is officially called "Eternal Youth" and represents the spirit of Enterprise, soon acquired the name Golden Boy because of the effect created when sunlight was reflected by the newly-cast bronze. Most of his admirers are content to view him from the ground. But as I read the Simon-Gardet correspondence I felt a growing desire to see him at close range — perhaps even touch him — and see how the long curved armature that holds him in place was anchored inside the dome. With Building Supervisor Todd Miclash as my guide I made the long ascent. It is not for the faint of heart. At one point a free-standing spiral staircase takes the eye straight up a dizzying 60 feet and effectively discourages most visitors from going any higher. Finally, from a small steel platform below the inner curve of the dome a small trap door can be opened. The visitor eases his head and shoulders through the hole and is rewarded with the sight of the 13.5-foot figure looming above him, but too far away to touch. Another disappointment: the steel shaft is not visible, as it is anchored in a sort of cupola above the dome. Still, the climb heightens one's admiration for all those who played a role in creating the statue and fixing him in the unshakeable position he has occupied for 74 years.

Another personal experience provides a footnote to this story of the Golden Boy's origins. One day in the spring of 1990, while strolling through the Trabuquet cemetery of Menton on the French Riviera, I was suddenly struck by this simple inscription on a columbarium tomb:

In loving memory
of
Frank Lewis Worthington Simon
Born 31 March 1862
Died 19 May 1933

The distinctive name and the dates convinced me that I was standing at the burial place of a man who is of particular importance to Manitobans, but who should be remembered by all Canadians for having designed one of the finest neo-classical structures in the country. Back home I checked Marilyn Baker's biographical sketch of Simon in *Symbol in Stone*. First, the dates coincided. Then I read: "Little is known about Simon's career after the completion of the Manitoba Legislative Building. He apparently returned to England for a time but eventually settled in Switzerland where he died." The Menton cemetery contains hundreds of graves of people from all over Europe who died in Menton, having gone there to retire or to benefit for a while from the superb climate. It is very probable that Simon, although officially a resident of Switzerland, spent the last months or weeks of his life in or near Menton.

According to a Government of Manitoba booklet describing the Legislative Building, Frank Simon said that the effect of the building which he had designed "would, in the course of time, make people around it more perceptive, more intelligent, better balanced and altogether more civilized human beings." He is also quoted as saying "Here you have no mountains to which you can lift up your hearts. And so you have all the more need of great architecture to lift them up. Men and women cannot be happy or good in surroundings that are commonplace, ugly, uninspiring." Whether the Golden Boy, which is the crowning adornment on Simon's buiding, has helped to make Manitobans "more

civilized human beings" is impossible to determine. But over the years he has "lifted them up" and become an emblem of achievement in various fields of endeavour. The fact that there is something mildly incongruous about a naked young man running with a lighted torch in one hand and a sheaf of wheat on his other arm has not detracted in any way from his reputation; perhaps it is this very improbability that has endeared him to residents of his province as well as to the thousands of other Canadians who have seen him. Of course he is also young, attractive and athletic and is racing toward the North, which was seen in 1919 as the land of boundless promise. It is perhaps significant too that he is not looking back to Eastern Canada and Europe, where the majority of the province's inhabitants originated, nor is he looking towards the great nation to the south for inspiration or direction. Could it be that he now has an added symbolism that never occurred to Simon and Gardet? ♦

Hubert G. Mayes, a retired university teacher, is a frequent contributor to "The Beaver". He lives in Winnipeg. His recent articles for "The Beaver" include an account of the last days of Lord Selkirk, a vignette of Robert W. Service in retirement in France and the story of the bells of St. Boniface and the poem they inspired.

DARTMOUTH 1917

Memories of a Day of Horrors

Introduced

By Harry Chapman

When the French munition ship *Mont Blanc* collided with the Belgian Relief vessel *Imo* in Halifax Harbour on that cool, sunny morning of 6 December 1917, the explosion and tidal wave that followed wiped out the north end of Halifax killing some 2,000 men, women and children and causing millions of dollars in property damage. In addition to the physical damage and loss of life, another 9,000 people were injured. Some would carry their limbless bodies, blindness, and scars of disfigurement to the grave.

In the years that followed, the tragic events of that fateful day have been well documented in books, newspaper and magazine articles, poems and songs, and in recent years in radio and television documentaries.

Almost forgotten in the annual recounting of the story has been the effect of the explosion on the people and life in Dartmouth, then a small town of some 5,000 residents on the eastern side of the harbour.

The numerical statistics are not as terrible as those for Halifax. Only about 50 residents died and the injury list numbers in the hundreds rather than thousands. However, homes and industries in the north end of Dartmouth, like those in Halifax, were reduced to rubble, the small Micmac village on the harbour shore was virtually wiped out, and life for many in the community was changed forever.

As part of the recent 75th anniversary observance of the explosion a concerted effort was made by Dartmouthians to document and publicize their explosion story along with the Halifax account. An anniversary committee was established by city council to develop programs that would fittingly recall the events of the 1917 disaster.

One of the projects unanimously adopted was an oral history of the explosion through taped interviews with some of the surviving citizens. The committee realized that unless work on such a program started immediately the list of survivors, now in their eighties and nineties, would get shorter with each passing year. One of the men interviewed, W.J. MacCall, a former editor with *The Mail Star,* a Halifax newspaper, died just days before the explosion anniversary.

James Candow, a member of the Explosion Committee, and Lois Richards, a member of the Dartmouth Heritage Association, volunteered their time and energy to seek out surviving residents and record their recollections of the explosion on audio tape.

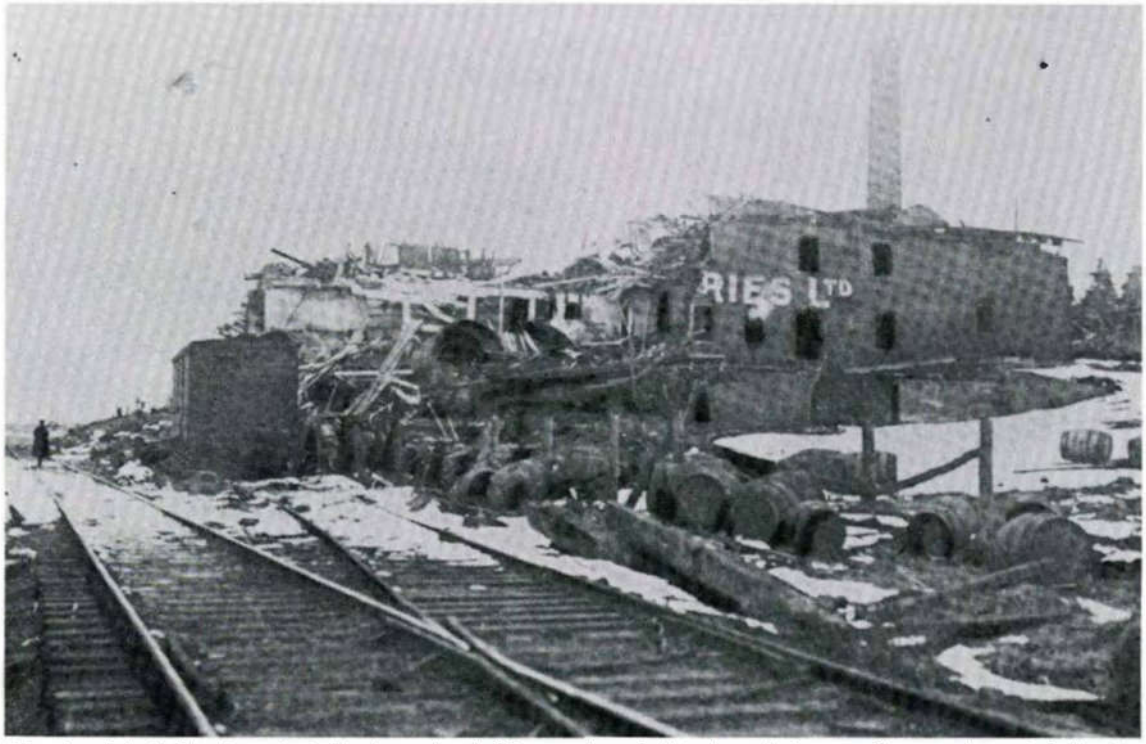
During the year, Mr. Candow interviewed 11 residents and Ms. Richards talked to seven survivors. Those interviewed remembered exactly where they were at the time of the explosion and were able to recall vividly the rescue and relief operations that followed. Their accounts of death, destruction, and heroism also formed the basis of a book written that year called *Dartmouth's Day of Anguish.*

Following are the abbreviated versions of the personal accounts of three of the residents who were witnesses to the 1917 explosion and its effects on Dartmouth and its people.

"Fires were everywhere. . . "

Mollie Forbes (nee Wilson) was 16 years old at the time and lived with her family in the central part of the town. This is her story:

> On the day of the explosion, I was returning from the Annapolis Valley with my mother where we had attended a wedding the previous day. We left Wolfville by train for Halifax early in the morning and when we reached Windsor Junction, about 15 miles from Halifax, we knew something was very seriously wrong. We could see smoke and flames coming from Halifax in the distance. The train brought us as far as Rockingham, on the outskirts of the city, and anyone could get off the train there or return to the Valley. My mother and I decided to get off because we wanted to go to our home and family to see what had happened to them.
>
> A car came by and offered us a drive into Halifax at our own risk. We drove into the north end of the city, which was in flames. Fires were everywhere and some of the people, still in their night clothes were walking around covered in blood. As we drove through the city we noticed the North Street Train



Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

The ruins of the Halifax Breweries Ltd. in the north end of Dartmouth overlooking the explosion scene. Seven employees, including the manager, Conrad Oland, were killed. The brewery never re-opened.

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

Houses in Dartmouth, particularly those in the north end, were turned into heaps of kindling following the explosion. Hundreds were left homeless and had to seek alternate accommodation during the winter months.

Public Archives of Nova Scotia

The Belgian Relief vessel "Imo" lies beached on the Dartmouth shore after its collision with the "Mont Blanc". The ship was refloated and towed to New York for repairs the following summer. In December 1921 she struck a rock and sank off the Falklands.

Station was completely demolished and the King Edward Hotel across the road was also destroyed.

The driver let us out on George Street in downtown Halifax and we proceeded down the street to the ferry terminal to get the boat for Dartmouth. The ferries were still running and we had to wait a long time while they removed a dead horse from the dock so the boat could get in.

We eventually got home and walked into the house through a broken door. The house was a wreck and there was glass everywhere from the windows that had blown in. Fortunately there was no one in the house at the time.

We had a large grandfather clock in our home and the hands had stopped at exactly six minutes past nine.

The next day there was a terrific storm that buried everyone.

One of the heroes was Dr. Dixon, who lived at the corner of King and Queen Street in the centre of town. The windows in his home were blown in and he moved his dining room table outside on the sidewalk and worked all day and into the night sewing up people and cleaning their wounds. He was one of many heroes at the time, it seemed like everyone was helping everyone.

"I thought the Germans were bombing . . ."

Waldon Langille was 13 years old when the 1917 Explosion occurred and lived with his parents in the central part of the town.

According to Mr. Langille, Dartmouth, which had a population of 5,000 people, was a manufacturing town with five shipyards, four foundries, a rolling mill, a molasses factory, a chocolate factory, a sugar refinery, a boiler shop, a paint factory, a brewery, the

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

The remains of Emmanuel Anglican church, which was located in the north end of Dartmouth near the explosion scene. A new church opened on the site in 1920.

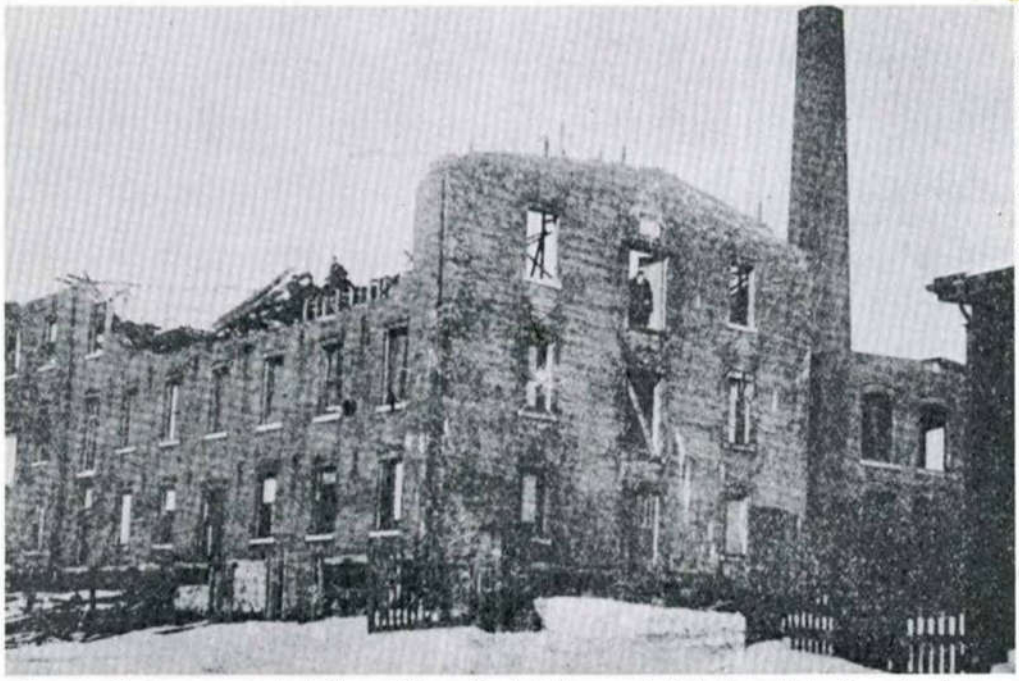
ropeworks, and the new Imperial Oil refinery on the outskirts of the community. He remembers that terrible day:

> I was in the school cloakroom having arrived for school a few minutes late. I remember hearing a bump and everything started to shake, then all the glass in the windows blew in. I buried my head in the coats, which provided some protection but I still got a bump on my head. All the children began screeching and ran out of the school and headed for home. We didn't know what had happened but I thought the Germans were bombing the town.
>
> There were five doctors living near where I lived and all of them were outside on the sidewalk attending to the injured. People were bringing injured men and women to the doctors on doors that had blown out of the houses. Some of the victims had part of their faces blown off, others had arms missing. The doctors treated the injured as quick as they could and then they were taken to hospitals. The dead were also taken away.
>
> That night we had a terrible blizzard that killed a lot of people who were still trapped in the rubble of buildings.
>
> The main force of the explosion seemed to be centred in the north end of the town where most of the damage occurred. Some people recalled seeing the bottom of the harbour when the tidal wave swept over the town.
>
> My uncle, who lived in the north end of the town was killed and my aunt was disfigured for the rest of her life.
>
> The people from Boston sent carloads of food, clothing, building supplies, and money, which was distributed by the relief committee. The explosion had a profound impact on the industrial life of the community, many of the industries closed down and never started up again.

"I was knocked to the ground."

Mollie Brenton (nee Brazier) was 15 years old and lived with her mother, stepfather, and two younger half-brothers in the north end of the town. She remembers:

> I was getting ready to go to my part-time job at Mrs. Henley's candy store in the downtown area. My youngest brother John, seated in his highchair looking out the window, drew our attention to the ships burning in the harbour.
>
> I went outside and across the street to get a better view of the burning ships. It was a beautiful sunny morning but a bit on the cool side. I stood there with another girl watching the ships when we were joined by a third girl.



Public Archives of Nova Scotia/A.W. Griswold

Consumer Cordage, a ropeworks, had its roof blown off and windows smashed in by the explosion. Several employees were killed and many were injured by the flying glass and debris. The building was eventually repaired.

Then the explosion went and I was knocked to the ground. The "Mont Blanc" was smashed into a million pieces. I remember seeing a huge tidal wave come up the harbour with a tugboat on top of it. The Belgian relief ship *Imo* which was involved in the collision came to the Dartmouth shore and beached herself. Then I ran home, I don't know where the other girls went.

The front steps to our home were torn away, the door was blown off, and all the windows were blown in.

I went inside and saw the stairway was torn from the wall and the leg from the piano came off and went through the wall in the hallway. There was glass and rubble everywhere. I found my youngest brother under the back of the stove, my other brother was standing in the doorway in a state of shock, and my mother was knocked to the floor by the tubs. After I got my mother to her feet she went to the water boiler, got water on her apron, and cleaned my brother's face. He had a severe cut on his forehead and cheeks, and his nose was smashed in.

Later in the morning a man came around and told us that we would have to evacuate the area because a second explosion was expected. We got the baby carriage and my mother and I and two brothers started out for Dr. Payzant's house — our family doctor, who lived in the downtown area. When we arrived there was a long lineup waiting to see him. We eventually got my brother in and he cleaned and dressed his wound as best he could.

We started for home when the all clear was given and found that our house was so badly damaged that it would have to be rebuilt. My mother went inside and began cleaning up one room for us to live in.

Across the harbour we could see fires in the north end of Halifax. I remember hearing the screams and moaning all night.

It started snowing sometime during the night and the wind began howling. We slept on the floor and when we awoke the snow was all around us in the room. We had to evacuate the building and went to live with friends in Halifax until after Christmas.

Most of the houses in the north end were flattened and the Micmac village farther north suffered severe damage with loss of life. Most of the native people who survived left the village and never returned. It took a long time to get back to normal after the explosion but I don't think I ever got back to normal.

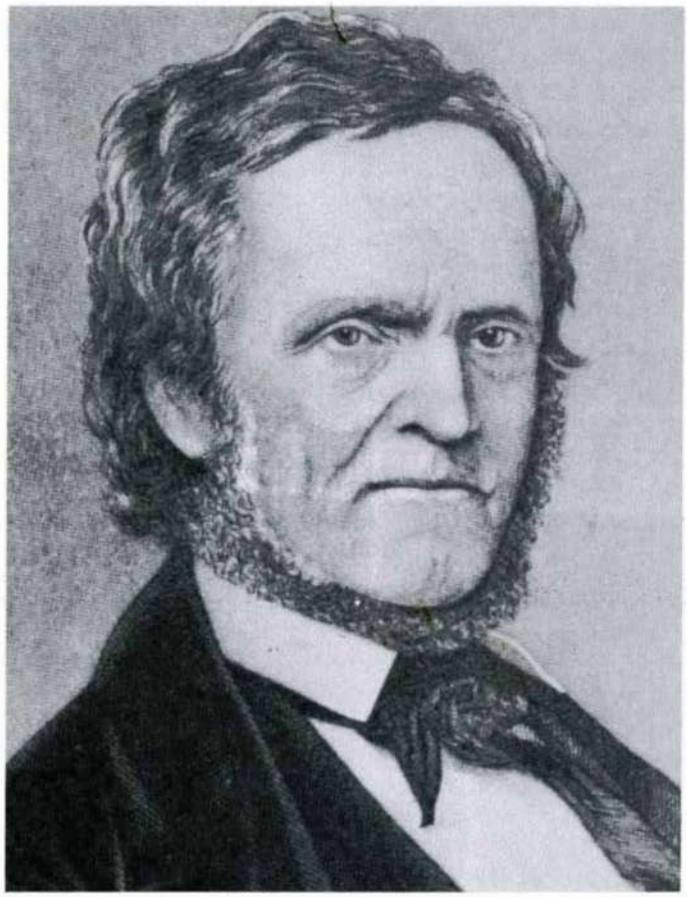
The taped interviews have been presented to the Dartmouth Heritage Museum for safe-keeping, where they are available for the present generation and generations into the future who want to relive that horrible day in December 1917 and its effects on the life of the community.

'Agin the Government'

By Robert Saunders

MUDDY YORK MUD
Scandal and Scurrility in Upper Canada

By Chris Raible. Curiosity House, Toronto, 1992. 304 pp., illus. $18.99. (Distributed by Dundurn Press).



William Lyon Mackenzie: "One of the patron saints of the noble army of Troublemakers." From "Muddy York Mud".

William Lyon Mackenzie has long been a hero in the pantheon of those who regard Canadian history as a steady march from colonial tutelage to sturdy nationalism. Indeed, with a few notable exceptions such as W.D. LeSueur and Aileen Dunham, most historians until recent times took the part of Mackenzie against his Tory detractors. By the middle of the present century, however, a more critical note was being heard. In 1956 the Toronto historian William Kilbourn wrote *The Firebrand*, a colourful but perceptive biography of Mackenzie. Kilbourn admired Mackenzie, but he also found him to be a somewhat ridiculous figure and he made it clear that Mackenzie could not, in any real sense, be considered one of the leaders of the reform movement.

Writing seven years after Kilbourn's book appeared, Gerald M. Craig in his *Upper Canada: The Formative Years* was even more critical of Mackenzie and much more sympathetic than Kilbourn had been to the opinions and beliefs of the Family Compact. Other writers have followed Craig's lead. Frederick H. Armstrong, the co-author of the notice on Mackenzie in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* has written extensively of Mackenzie in a tone which is at times surprisingly scornful. For instance, in a 1971 article for the *Journal of Canadian Studies* (vol. 6, no. 3) he concedes that MacKeenzie can perhaps be said to have played a role in the reform movement but only in the sense that his ill-fated rebellion of 1837 so discredited and demoralized the radicals in Upper Canada that the way was clear for genuine reformers such as Robert Baldwin to do their work.

However that may be, it is beyond dispute that Mackenzie figured prominently in the dramatic events of his time and it is no less evident that the so-called Types Riot of 1826 was a turning point in his career. The story is too well known to need recounting in detail. By the spring of 1826 Mackenzie's fortunes were at a low ebb. His paper, *The Colonial Advocate,* was short of funds and was appearing only at irregular intervals. It seemed that it would soon sink out of sight as other radical papers had before it.

Then in June he had what turned out to be a stroke of luck. A gang of young Tory hotheads, outraged by the paper's ferocious attacks on what was soon to be known as the Family Compact, smashed their way into the office of *The Colonial Advocate*, tore the place apart and

hurled a good bit of the paper's type into Toronto Bay.

If they imagined that this stupid and senseless act had silenced Mackenzie, they were badly mistaken. A court — administered, it should be noted, by those very members of the ruling oligarchy that Mackenzie had so reviled — awarded him £625 in compensation which enabled him to go on printing his paper and traducing his enemies. What is more, the Types Riot established him firmly in the role of a martyr in the cause of liberty. It was a part he was to relish playing for the rest of his life.

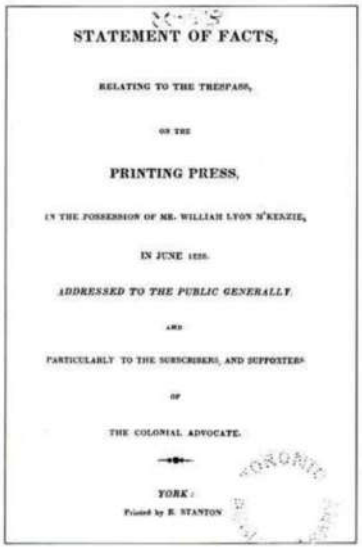
Chris Raible is the first historian to have devoted a book to a detailed examination of the Types Riot and the motives of those taking part in it. He comes to the conclusion that the original instigator was a certain John Lyons, private clerk to Upper Canada's lieutenant-governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland. Late in May of 1826 a series of savagely satirical pieces had run in *The Colonial Advocate* written supposedly by a "Patrick Swift" who was, of course, none other than Mackenzie himself. "Swift" cast aspersions on the character of many of the Family Compact members and poked fun especially at what was alleged to be their extremely low-class ancestry. The proud, class-conscious clique that ruled in Upper Canada found this galling beyond measure and one of the most deeply distressed was Lady Sarah Maitland, wife of the lieutenant-governor and daughter of the Duke of Richmond. Her anguish aroused Lyons' chivalrous instincts. He was resolved to ruin Mackenzie and destroy his pernicious paper.

Raible speculates that Lyons may have revealed his intentions to Upper Canada's attorney-general, the formidable John Beverley Robinson. What seems certain is that it was Lyons who recruited Sam Jarvis, Peter McDougall and a few others and that together these men set in train the events that led to the trashing of *The Colonial Advocate*'s office.

Muddy York Mud may be read on at least two levels. In the first place, it is a lively and fascinating account of the turmoil and scandals that beset the social life of Toronto in the 1820s. There are stories here of malice and passion, duels and elopements, madness and intrigue that seem to come straight out of some lurid romance of Regency England. It is all far removed from the comfortable, complacent Toronto of old we thought we knew. Those awe-inspiring figures whose portraits look down on us so sternly and self-righteously from the walls of many a venerable institution, stand revealed as men and women stirred by the same passions and cursed with the same weaknesses as ourselves. They may not always have been admirable people but they were fully and vibrantly alive.

Those familiar with Raible's contributions to *The Beaver* will be aware of his skill as a story-teller. *Muddy York Mud* has, however, more to offer than simply a collection of scandalous anecdotes, splendid although some of these are. On a deeper level, the book is a serious study of the social mores and political beliefs of those who held power in the Upper Canada of the 1820s.

Two convictions dominated their minds. They were sure, firstly, that a wholesome community must have as its focus the church, and by this they meant the Church of England. Secondly, they believed that the English parliamentary system, combining as they thought it did



STATEMENT OF FACTS,

RELATING TO THE TRESPASS,

ON THE

PRINTING PRESS,

IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. WILLIAM LYON M'KENZIE,

IN JUNE 1826.

ADDRESSED TO THE PUBLIC GENERALLY,

AND

PARTICULARLY TO THE SUBSCRIBERS, AND SUPPORTERS

OF

THE COLONIAL ADVOCATE.

YORK:

Printed by E. STANTON

liberty with order, was the most perfect that the mind of man could devise.

By the same token, they abhorred the populist anarchy which they were convinced existed in the United States and which they feared might sweep north. Rev. John Strachan, later to become Bishop of Toronto, denounced the "spirit of levelling" pervading Upper Canada and warned against the "doubtful characters and secret traitors" who would betray the province to the United States. No doubt he had radicals of the Mackenzie type in mind.

Today, with our mainline churches emptying and with colonialism a pejorative word, such concepts have about them an air of musty irrelevance. For all that, they were neither ignoble nor worthy of derision.

What of William Lyon Mackenzie? He is archtypical of those who are perpetually "agin the government" and could serve as one of the patron saints of the noble army of Troublemakers down through the ages. He hated authority in any form and he was a master of righteous indignation. When, for instance, in the spring of 1826 it was announced that Strachan, then a member of the Legislative Council, was going to England on provincial as well as ecclesiastical business, Mackenzie could not resist the temptation to preach to the preacher.

"Read Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, Doctor, and then leave your congregation if you dare," he wrote in *The Colonial Advocate* of 9 March 1826. "You will become the scoff and derision, the bye-word and reproach of those for whom you shall have laid aside your gown and cassock, your Bible and prayer-book, to turn dabbler in the impure and uncanonical mire of provincial party politics. . . . You may, when too late, wish you had served your Heavenly King with that ardour with which you now obey the nod of a Colonial Governor. You cannot serve God and Mammon."

A few weeks later Mackenzie abandoned his air of lofty piety and adopted a shriller, more virulent tone. The unfortunate Strachan was

held up to ridicule as a "little, awkward-looking body with a crooked hat . . . a diminutive, paltry, insignificant Scotch turncoat parish schoolmaster." (Strachan, it must be remembered, had arrived in Canada as a Presbyterian minister.) It is not hard to see why Mackenzie so infuriated the powers-that-be. The Types Riot was undoubtedly a foolish act but it, or something like it, was probably bound to happen sooner or later.

People such as Mackenzie are needed in every society. They serve as a goad to jab and torment the complacent and those whom Burns called the "unco guid". Often as not the perspective of history proves that they were, like Mackenzie himself, on the side of the angels, more or less. Raible has had the good sense to publish as an appendix to his book the full text of the "Patrick Swift" commentaries and they are still great fun to read nearly 170 years later.

Raible works at Mackenzie House for the Toronto Historical Board and he is also a member of the Town of York Historical Society. Eight closely-packed pages of notes testify to his far-ranging research in both primary and secondary sources. The charm and vigour of his narrative style should not deceive us into thinking he has written an inconsequential book. His learning is lightly borne but it is none the less impressive for that.

Toronto-born Robert Saunders is a retired journalist who lives in Winnipeg.

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An Adventure Story

By Peter Carver

THE STORY OF CANADA

By Janet Lunn and Christopher Moore. Illustrated by Alan Daniel. Key-Porter Books and Lester Publishing, Toronto, 1992. 320 pp., illus. $35.00.

In the beginning there is a story — a story of dinosaurs, their mysterious extinction, and eventual reappearance as fossil bones in the badlands of Alberta a mere 100 years ago.

In the end there is another story — a story of two young Northern adventurers who in April of 1985 began sailing their catamaran eastward through the Northwest Passage in Canada's Arctic, a passage marked by relics of legendary tribes and explorers.

In between are a multitude of stories, all about Canada and Canadians, about struggles and failures and triumphs. Stories about families and communities and nations. Stories about individuals who made a difference, and about people who did the best they could just to survive.

All this is contained in *The Story of Canada*. This hefty but entirely accessible volume is the product of five years of highly imaginative effort by co-authors Janet Lunn and Christopher Moore and illustrator Alan Daniel, directed by various editors working for three different publishers. It's a publication with high production qualities, rich with colour throughout.

The Story of Canada provides contemporary young Canadian readers and their families for the first time a fresh and coherent view of the story of their country. The creators of this book lay to rest forever the notion that Canadian history is "dullsville".

Credit for that accomplishment must be shared equally by the team who have put it all together. First there was the wise decision to marry the talents of one of our most gifted writers of fiction, Janet Lunn, with those of Governor General Award-winning historian Christopher Moore. The historical narrative through the book's ten chapters is sure and illuminating, touching crucial stages in our history; significantly the authors do not dwell long on the traditional "great men" whose roles have been exhaustively described in countless school texts. But they do trace movements of peoples and communities across the continent, making important connections which young readers will be readily able to grasp. The principal storyline deals with individuals as disparate as the tragic Donnaconna — who died in Europe, captive of Jacques Cartier — and Cariboo John Cameron — whose discovery of a golden bonanza at Barkerville in the 1860s was quickly followed by the death of his wife and the total loss of his fortune.

As counterpoint to the basic text, generous sidebars and double-page spreads give rich insights into, for example: the story of the Loyalist cow who swam across the Niagara River rather than remain the property of an American farmer; the lonely travails of Samuel Hearne during his search for the Coppermine River; the escape to Canada of fleeing Southern slave Josiah Henson; the memories of a child who once waved at King George VI and Queen Elizabeth during their visit to Canada in 1939; and the story of Terry Fox. One of the legendary buffalo jumps on the western plains is vividly described. Another sidebar tells of the origins of the black Loyalist community in Nova Scotia. And there is a poignant account of the "home children", orphans sent out from Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to find new lives under often-harsh circumstances in a strange new land.

But the strong narrative base for this lively history is most vividly established by the wonderfully active watercolour illustrations of Alan Daniel. The opportunity to illumi-

Alan Daniel illustration from "The Story of Canada".

nate Canadian history on this scale comes once in a generation, and Daniel has made the most of the assignment. In small spot illustrations, in larger action and character pictures, full-page scenes, and above all in almost 20 magnificent double-page spreads, Daniel has provided readers with dramatic visual stories as consuming as those found in the text. Whether he's showing a Métis family's wagon, laden with pemmican, bumping over the prairie, or giving us a glimpse of Confederation celebrations in his own hometown, now known as Kitchener, Ontario, Daniel's art has a quality and scope that sets it apart in the field of children's literature. Daniel deserves recognition for his contribution to *The Story of Canada* wherever awards for illustrators are handed out.

Two particularly fascinating spreads catch the eye. First is an artist's eye view of the taking of perhaps the most famous photograph in Canadian history, the driving of the last spike at Craigellachie in the B.C. Interior; the caption identifies some of the famous and more obscure characters at the scene. The other penetrates a more private moment: on a wintry railway platform where a gigantic locomotive huffs in the background, a soldier returning home from World War I kneels in the snow, his wife gesturing in frantic welcome, while a solitary little girl stands at a distance, wondering who the stranger is.

The designers of the book have not placed the whole weight for providing visual material on Daniel's shoulders however. Historical drawings and paintings — and photographs — are smoothly blended with the text, in contexts which make us look at them with new eyes. Ample recognition has been accorded Canadian artists from Cornelius Krieghoff to Paul Kane to Tom Thomson to Charles Comfort to William Kurelek.

This is not to suggest that *The Story of Canada* is a collection of pretty pictures with text to string them together. An enormous amount of information is contained in more than 300 pages — including a timeline at the end.

One constant narrative theme traces the history of Canada's first nations, beginning with an account of their arrival thousands of years ago and describing their developing civilization. We learn about the steady escalation of the troubled relationship between the first nations (along with their more recent cousins, the Métis) and the Europeans who, from the date of their arrival in the sixteenth century, steadily encroached upon and enclosed the land which had previously been so open and accessible to all. The final chapter, dealing with Canada in the postwar era, credits Canada's first nations with their role in the constitutional reform movements of the late 1980s and early '90s.

Social history is prominent — for example, in the pests and plagues Europeans brought to the new land and which led to such disastrous blights on the lives of first nations; in the daily lives of the early habitants of the St. Lawrence valley; and in glimpses into the family life of

various classes at the end of the last century.

Historical purists may begin by noting the absence of some key elements of our national story — an inevitable circumstance given the need to keep the project within manageable dimensions. But this book is not for professional historians. Ultimately most readers will get caught up in a new awareness of the drama and diversity of our national chronicle. *The Story of Canada* is an immensely satisfying book to read.

The saga of this ambitious project is in itself worth recording. It begins with the pulling together of an extraordinarily talented team — two award-winning writers, one of Canada's most gifted illustrators, and some of this country's most skilled editors — then moves into the bankruptcy of the original publishing company (Lester & Orpen Dennys), the entry of a new player (Key Porter Books), and the re-emergence of some of the key players of the original publishing team, to see the book eventually completed and published as a joint venture — two years after its originally scheduled release date.

Canadian publishing is in a frail state today, and we should be thankful that, despite hold-ups which threatened the very life of this project, *The Story of Canada* — printed in Canada, please note — has at last seen the light of day. It's a true national treasure.

Peter Carver is a Toronto freelance editorial consultant, specializing in books for young people. He is a partner in the recently-established Boardwalk Books.

Prisoners of the Kaiser

By Allan Levine

SILENT BATTLE
Canadian Prisoners of War in Germany 1914-1919

By Desmond Morton. Lester Publishing, Toronto, 1992. 218 pp., illus. $26.95.

"War", William T. Sherman, the American Civil War general, once said, "is all hell." Had he lived to witness the ravages of World War I, Sherman would have seen further evidence of man's cruelty and ability to foster destruction. Surviving the trench warfare and poison gas was not easy; about 630,000 Canadians served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and Navy during World War I, resulting in 60,000 deaths and more than 170,000 wounded.

There were other soldiers, 3,842 in all, who were captured and spent several very harsh years imprisoned by the German enemy. This latest book by University of Toronto historian Desmond Morton, a prolific chronicler of Canada's military experiences, traces in vivid detail their terrible ordeal. Much of his evidence comes from the report of a 1931-32 Royal Commission distributing German reparations to former prisoners. Travelling across the country, the Commissioner, Mr. Justice Errol McDougall heard, as Morton observes, a "gruesome catalogue of torture, beatings, starvation, and medical neglect."

The rules of war in 1914, including the treatment of prisoners, were governed by a diplomatic convention agreed upon by the major European powers at a conference at the Hague in 1899 and later slightly revised at another meeting in 1907. In general, the convention dictated that prisoners of war were to be dealt with humanely; that they were to receive food, shelter and clothing; that they were not to be used as slave labour; and that acts of insubordination could result in acceptable disciplinary punishment.

Once the war started, however, many of the Germans in charge of Allied prisoners (but not all) largely ignored these basic rules of conduct. "War is not a humanitarian exercise," Morton writes, "and the civilized restraints of the Hague Convention were easily forgotten when soldiers far from battle discovered any flicker of resistance among an otherwise hangdog and dispirited crowd of prisoners."

Like many others, the Germans believed that the war would be over within a matter of weeks and had made no real contingency plans for dealing with captured soldiers. But as the war dragged on, battles at Ypres, Sanctuary Wood, St. Eloi and the Somme presented them with a large problem: what to do with thousands of British, French and Canadian prisoners. The International Red Cross and American diplomats (before the U.S. entered the war in 1917) attempted to help with medical and food supplies and inspect prisoner-of-war camps, although their efforts were only partially successful. By 1916, Germany itself faced a shortage of food and medicine, and the care of prisoners was not a priority.

For the most part, therefore, life in a German prisoner-of-war camp was horrendous. The Germans hated their British captives the most, and so they got the worst of it; the Canadians, who the Germans believed had no business fighting a European war, did not fare much better. Although there were exceptions (officers were accorded better treatment and some German guards showed kindness), the majority of Canadian prisoners spent years in barbed-wire enclosed camps, received little food, and lived in a constant state of fear. Beatings or *stillgestanden* (in which prisoners were forced "to stand erect, toes at an angle of forty-five degrees, thumbs in line with the seams on your pants" for up to 15 hours) were

routine punishment for the most minor cases of disobedience. Failed escape attempts — 100 Canadian soldiers managed to successfully escape — resulted in harsher disciplinary action.

Charles Taylor, a 31-year old private from Toronto was beaten with a knotted rope and then spent 21 days in solitary confinement for trying to escape; Thomas Dewdney, only 21 years old, attempted to escape twice. "Both times he was recaptured and beaten again, once with a stick, the second time with rifle butts," relates Morton. "As a final blow, a guard kicked him in the groin. He needed two weeks in hospital before he could walk again." Prisoners who were sent to work in German coal and salt mines suffered an even more miserable fate. As virtual slaves, their brutal experiences rival the terrible wartime stories of survivors of Nazi work camps during World War II. In the end, 283 Canadian prisoners died in German hands.

Once the war was over and the prisoners were released, Canada did not welcome them back with open arms. As far as the government, military and most citizens were concerned, being captured was no honour. There was no special treatment for the men, medical, financial or otherwise. The ex-prisoners had to wait more than a decade for any monetary compensation. A small number received on average about $500, paltry even by 1930s standards and most were not awarded anything at all by the sceptical Justice McDougall. Claimants for baggage lost in the sinking of the British liner *Lusitania* received more money.

In detailing what he calls "a deplorable chapter in German military history", Morton lets the Canadian soldiers tell their own horror stories of brutality and other atrocities, a style that works fairly well. Indeed, *Silent Battle* fills in a gap in the history of Canada during the Great War.

Yet, lacking in Morton's approach is documentation on how German prisoners were treated in Allied camps. Reading between the lines, there is a subtle suggestion that the British were more civilized and respectful of the guidelines set down in the Hague Convention in dealing with their prisoners. But how are readers to judge the behavior of the German soldiers and jailers without any real reference to the actions of the other side? Morton's case against the Germans would have been strengthened had he placed the prisoners' experiences in the context of the times.

Allan Levine is a Winnipeg historian and writer. His next book, "Scrum Wars: The Prime Ministers and the Media," will be published by Dundurn Press in autumn 1993.

Purely Ornamental

By John Ayre

THE IMAGINARY INDIAN

By Daniel Francis. Arsenal Pulp Press, Vancouver, 1992. 258 pp., illus. $15.95.

Ever since Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. published his *The White Man's Indian* in 1978, there has been a fundamental need for a Canadian companion volume about Indian clichés here. Such a book could never be a parochial addendum. With figures like Pauline Johnson, Long Lance, Grey Owl, Ralph Connor and Ernest Thompson Seton, all of whose reputations were solidly international in the first decades of the century, Canada was peculiarly in the forefront of shaping "red man" mythology. Historian Daniel Francis has at last taken on the delectable task of exploring this territory. He has produced a splendid and highly readable volume about how the imagery of Canadian Indians — from Hollywood studios to Ottawa offices — has been manipulated, romanticized and often abused to serve the emotional and sometimes darkly political needs of the ascendant white society.

Following Berkhofer, Francis shows how much the word "Indian" is really a projective test releasing many addled sentiments and notions in whites which have retarded understanding of real native people and their interests. The imaginary Indian, in other words, whether Noble Savage or fiendish bloodthirsty warrior, has never really existed.

To establish theme and variation, Francis starts with a first-class lie, the famous painting by Benjamin West, *The Death of Wolfe*. While almost everything in the picture is fictionalized, the most curious distortion of all is the inclusion of a Mohawk warrior with the posture of Rodin's *Thinker* on the left of the canvas. Unlike the shabby distraught British officers around the dying Wolfe, he's above it all, clean, contemplative, like a musing shaman. With a full complement of feathers and gear, he's definitely the exotic Noble Savage. The problem was that no Indian was really there. West just brazenly painted him in.

West's Mohawk later evolved in another cliché, the Vanishing Indian, whose life was romantically recorded by, among others, Paul Kane, Emily Carr and American photographer

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Edward Curtis who often worked on the Canadian West Coast. Francis points to one exception, Edmund Morris, who realistically painted his Blackfoot subjects in southern Alberta in the 1907-1910 period. Failing to understand the *zeitgeist*, Morris was promptly relegated to obscurity until very recently by whites who insisted on the doctored exoticism, say, of Kane's Indians. Francis records an extreme example of this mentality. In 1886, a Kwakiutl group went overseas to exhibit their costumes and perform rituals. They were considered doubtful by a German public who yearned for the greater "authenticity" of the red man of the Wild West shows.

With outright impostors like Long Lance and Grey Owl, Francis has some easy and enjoyable territory to cover. In Pauline Johnson and Ernest Thompson Seton, though, there is a more ambiguous landscape. Pauline Johnson of course was a real Six Nations' Mohawk. While raised as a cultured white woman, she nevertheless learned to exploit white greed for exoticism by reciting her painfully sentimental Victorian verse in buckskin costume, complemented by "an authentic Huron scalp inherited from her great-grandfather." She was in a sense similar to Sitting Bull and Geronimo and many others who were forced into parody in Wild West shows after their fighting days were over.

Seton, however, was peculiar in trying to enfold supposed Indian lore and ritual into white society through his League of Woodcraft Indians which underpinned the early Boy Scouts and Indian-theme summer camps for children. It was part of a basic romanticism which is still with us. In an interesting aside, Francis notes: "The men's movement . . . exhorting men to discover the Wild Man within and to go drumming and dancing in the woods on expeditions that sound suspiciously like Seton camp-outs, recalls (Seton's) *Gospel of the Red Man*."

Yet grim anti-romanticism was hardly a solution either. There were those, mostly government bureaucrats like Duncan Campbell Scott, who wanted to see the Indians dressed in western clothes, driving buggies, farming wheat and praying in tidy Anglican chapels. They certainly wanted an end to the carnival Indian. This could have been a solution if it were not so inconsistently and insensitively applied. Everyday clothing is a minor issue but the corresponding attempt to stamp out such forms of cultural identity as the potlatch and sun dance struck at the core of a people's existence. Ironically there was little reward for "going white." Productive native farmers were often forced out of business by jealous whites.

While the *The Imaginary Indian* is impressively comprehensive, Francis fails to indicate the extent that the romantic red man is still pervasive in our culture. Drugstore romances for women continue to show lurid covers of long-haired Indian he men ravishing white settler women. Romances for men like the peculiar Donald Clayton Porter's *White Indian* series of the 1970s and 1980s simply reverse the racial equation. Among Canadian writers, these clichés still appear on an ostensibly more sophisticated level. James Houston's novels in particular, *Ghost Fox, Eagle Song* and *Running West*, all internationally published in the last twenty years, continue the basic nineteenth-century romantic conventions of noble, often violent, savages who stand like mighty aristocrats against encroaching white puritan (*ie.* repressed) society.

In effect, *The Imaginary Indian* shows us a mirror we always thought was a window. In every way it serves the ideal function of cultural history, of projecting our own fantasies back at us. What we see, alas, is a range of really very sordid Hallowe'en masks.

John Ayre of Guelph, Ontario, is working on a book on Inuit art.

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THE BEAVER

A Gift
That Lasts
All Year

'The Fighting Tenth'

By Ian McCulloch

GALLANT CANADIANS
The Story of the Tenth Canadian Infantry Battalion 1914-1919.

By Daniel G. Dancocks, published by The Calgary Highlanders Regimental Funds Foundation, 840 6th Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2P 3E8: 1990. 251pp., illus. $35.00.

The importance of morale in a fighting unit can never be overstated. Only the very best units can maintain good morale over a long period of time in the face of prolonged combat and heavy casualties. "The Fighting Tenth" of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the Great War of 1914-1918 was one such elite unit. Its remarkable exploits have finally been chronicled in the late Daniel Dancocks' excellent book *Gallant Canadians*.

Dancocks the storyteller, as well as Dancocks the experienced military historian, is evident in every page of *Gallant Canadians*. He takes us from the birth of the battalion — a motley collection of farm lads, clerks, ranchers, lawyers and accountants who came primarily from southern Alberta and Manitoba — through the furious fights on Vimy Ridge and the muddy slopes of Passchendaele, to the Last Hundred Days and the triumphant march into defeated Germany.

A former commanding officer, "Dangerous Dan" Ormond, later attributed the success of the Fighting Tenth to its excellent morale which he contended "was a never-ceasing wonder to the higher command". Pondering the matter after the war, Ormond wrote, "it became obvious to me that we had never lost the initial morale of the winter of 1914-1915. The morale of the junior ranks was so high that they carried the seniors along with them. That was the case during the whole existence of the battalion."

Dancocks also sagely identifies the other key factor of the unit's success — excellent leadership. In one of the chapters, a grizzled sergeant-major fondly recalls that the Fighting Tenth's officers were always "a damned good type of man that seemed to be able to mould himself into the situation and the position he found himself in."

Dancocks, who wrote many books on World War I, including one on General Sir Arthur Currie, notes that this most famous Canadian general of that war was reluctant to have the Tenth Battalion transferred into his Second Brigade whilst camped at Salisbury Plain in 1915. By November 1918 however, Currie, now commanding the Canadian Corps, told Ormond (then commanding a brigade) that "the Tenth Battalion was the only unit in the corps that could go into a show, come out, reorganize and within three days be as good as before the action".

Dancocks' chapters are vivid and at the same time disconcerting. His descriptions of action are fast moving and in most cases tempered with the words of those present. Of particular note is his account of the Fighting Tenth's magnificent participation in the Battle of Saint-Julien Wood on 22 April 1915.

The story of "The Fighting Tenth" is the story of all Canadians — a true and vivid tale of the trials and tribulations experienced by the human soul in the carnage of war. It will disturb you and, no doubt, sadden you. But it will make you proud to be a Canadian.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ian McCulloch is the Commanding Officer of the First Battalion, The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada, Montreal, Quebec.

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Steamer *Northcote* at Fort Edmonton, 1875

BY PETER RINDLISBACHER

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Olympic Glory 1928

The Beaver

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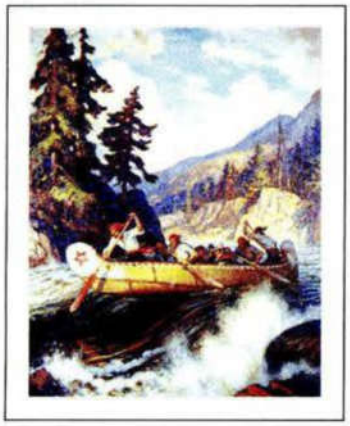
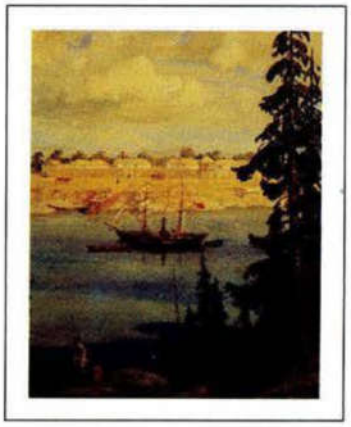
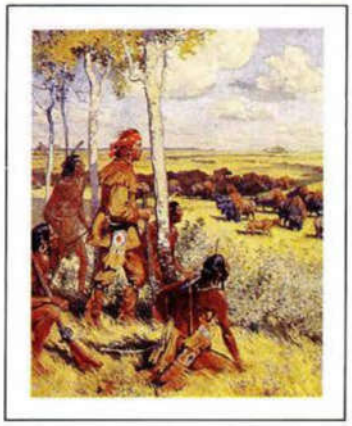


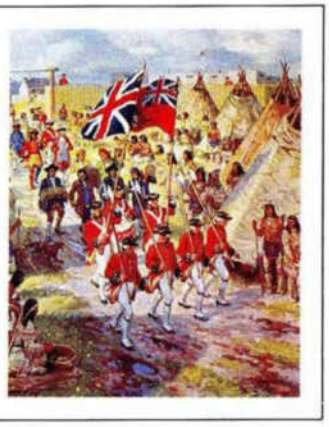
A. *Chief Trader Archibald McDonald Descending the Fraser*
By A. Sherriff Scott.



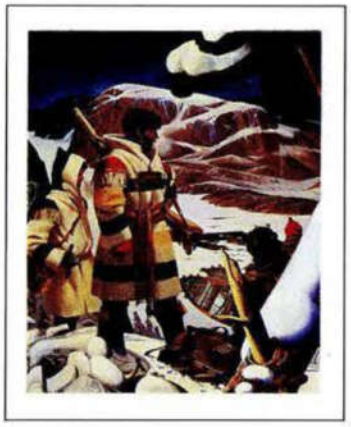
B. *S.S. "Beaver" Off Fort Victoria*
By A. Sherriff Scott.



C. *Kelsey Sees the Buffalo*
By C.W. Jefferys.



D. *Trading Ceremony at York Factory*
By A. Sherriff Scott.



E. *R.M. Ballantyne and Chief Trader George Barnston at Tadoussac, 1846*
By Charles Comfort.

F. *Battle in the Bay, 1697*
By Norman Wilkinson.

Over the years the Hudson's Bay Company has commissioned distinguished Canadian painters to create works depicting important events in the long history of the Company. Among the most popular works in the HBC collection are those pictured above by C.W. Jefferys, A. Sherriff Scott, Norman Wilkinson and Charles Comfort.

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Called to a Higher Court

By Chris Raible

SPEEDY JUSTICE
The Tragic Last Voyage of His Majesty's Vessel "Speedy"

By Brendan O'Brien. University of Toronto Press (for the Osgoode Society), Toronto 1992. 168 pp., illus. $35.00.

It was a dark and stormy night. On the eighth day of October in the year 1804, residents of the town of Newcastle on the shore of Lake Ontario anxiously waited for the arrival of a schooner from the provincial capital, York. Last sighted off the coast just before the sudden squall blew in, the vessel had been unable to reach the safe harbour before nightfall. A great bonfire beacon was lit to guide her through the darkness. But the good ship *Speedy* never arrived.

On board the boat were some twenty persons. Most of them were members of an official party, sent to conduct a trial in the newly completed Newcastle District courthouse. An Ojibwa native was charged with killing a white man, and the colonial administration was eager for justice to be done — and to be seen to be done. But the murder trial was never held. When the *Speedy* vanished in the storm, there were no survivors.

In a sense, the passengers were representative of the provincial population, except that there were no women. There was the schooner's captain, Thomas Paxton, assisted by his crew of five seamen. There were two unidentified children, travelling by boat while their parents made the more difficult (and less expensive) journey by land. There was a black slave, Simon Baker, and also another servant, name unknown. There was the accused native prisoner, Ogetonicut, along with Constable John Fisk to guard him and Indian agent George Cowan to act as interpreter. There were men intending to testify at the trial: merchant Jacob Herchmer, surveyor John Stegman, and justice of the peace James Russell. A law student, John Anderson, was also making the journey, accompanying the man who planned to prosecute, Robert Isaac Dey Gray, Solicitor General and member of the House of Assembly. To undertake the defence was Angus Macdonell, treasurer of the Law Society and also an Assemblyman. Completing the cast of characters sailing to Newcastle for a courtroom scene destined never to take place was Mr. Thomas Cochran, puisne justice of the Court of King's Bench.

Shipwrecks are the stuff of melodrama and of folklore — the wreck of the *Speedy* is no exception. It has been fictionalized in periodicals and in popular accounts, referred to in personal memoirs and in provincial histories. Surprisingly, the facts of the disaster have never before been seriously researched. The tale has never before been properly told. As author Brendan O'Brien, a Toronto lawyer, pointedly notes, at the time there was no official inquiry into the loss of the *Speedy*, although there was every reason to hold one. Nearly two hundred years after the fact, O'Brien has conducted a judicial investigation of his own.

Like many a good story, this one is several stories. It is a story of native justice — and injustice. When European settlers killed natives, there was rarely even a pretense of the conducting of a trial or the imposition of a punishment. On one occasion, Ojibwa Whistling Duck

Edwardian Memories

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(See tax information on page 48)

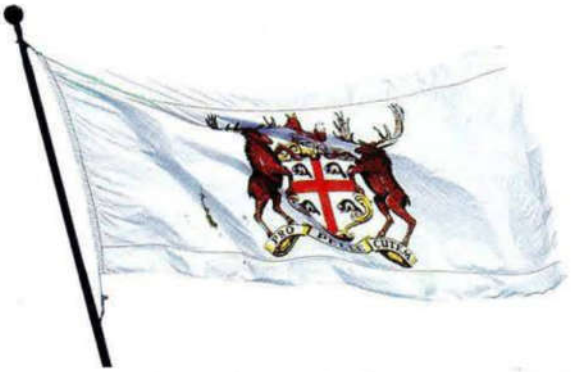
(what was his name in his own language?) was killed, almost certainly by Samuel Cozens, yet provincial authorities took little notice. What a contrast when Whistling Duck's brother, Ogetonicut (the prisoner on board the *Speedy*), was charged with killing fur trader John Sharp. Authorities moved immediately for a full-blown trial, properly conducted according to legal protocol. In concise lawyerly fashion, O'Brien lays out for us the circumstances of both these homicides and the events surrounding them.

Perhaps even more poignantly presented is O'Brien's chapter "Natives, Society and the Law," a digest of native-white legal relations in Upper Canada during the first decade of the province's existence. This detailing of specifics reveals few surprises, yet it is a chapter which needs to be read. Case after case is cited, demonstrating the almost total failure of white justice as far as native people were concerned.

Speedy Justice is also a naval narrative. The Provincial Marine, responsible for navigation on Lake Ontario, was plagued by problems. In early Upper Canada, with its few poor roads and no good ones, water provided the only sure link between scattered settlements. Travel by sailing ship was essential and hazardous. Weather was unpredictable, charts were limited, navigators were inexperienced, seamen were discontented and often deserted. The needs of the military to provide a defence against potential American invasions competed with the needs of settlers for commerce and communication. The marine administration was divided in its jurisdiction and confused in its purposes. Boats were poorly designed, badly built and inadequately maintained.

The records of the *Speedy* itself reveal that it was constantly subject to problems. A year after its launching in 1799, it developed serious leaks, and it needed repairs every year thereafter. Bureaucratic red tape, delaying orders for necessary supplies, made maintenance even more difficult. By the year 1804, the ship was in very poor shape. Poor

Flags of the Adventurers



Now the familiar "house flag" of the Hudson's Bay Company, the white banner bearing the famous HBC coat-of-arms has a long and dramatic history. It flew over ships of the Company's sailing fleet that left Gravesend for Hudson Bay in 1767 and it continued to identify Company vessels until the late eighteen hundreds. In this century it has been the standard of the HBC Governors and, since the 1970s, the Honourable Company's official flag. Now this fine 3 ft. x 6 ft. flag is available in weather-resistant nylon as a special limited offer to readers of *The Beaver.*

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Captain Paxton did not want to venture out in his semi-crippled vessel that fateful October day. But Lieutenant-Governor Peter Hunter insisted — the wet fall season meant that travel from York to Newcastle by road would have been very slow indeed. Departing Toronto Bay, the schooner ran aground and was delayed for two hours, thus making certain that it would later run into the storm.

Perhaps most of all, the saga of the *Speedy* is a political story. A month after the disaster, a colonist wrote of the tragic incident, commenting: "There is a stop to all business at York. The loss is dreadful — and will throw a damp for a long time on such a small place."

The social/political fabric of the province in those early days was very thin. One storm took one-twentieth of York's population and one-tenth of the attorneys in the whole colony. Lost was one of only three provincial justices (and a second was out of the province). The fact that Cochran had been appointed to the King's Bench at age twenty-seven, and Gray named Solicitor General at twenty-three, is indication of the legal profession's short supply. Gone down with the *Speedy* were two of fewer than thirty Assemblymen. Into these vacuums soon moved Judge Robert Thorpe and William Weekes, to form the province's first true opposition party, Irish thorns in the side of the Scottish Lieutenant-Governor. They, along with Joseph Willcocks, caused a major political turmoil — O'Brien sketches it, but it is a well known chapter in Upper Canadian history.

Like an advocate building his argument on the precedents of previous cases, O'Brien has largely constructed his book with evidence turned up by earlier researchers. He would have been lost without the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* entries on most of his key characters, or the background on provincial life provided by Edith Firth in her Champlain Society volume, *The Town of York 1793-1815*. Fortunately, he also looked directly at letters and other primary documents, as well as the *Upper Canada Gazette*, the only newspaper in the province at the time.

Three months after the *Speedy* went down, that paper quoted an election address which summarized the feelings of the time:

> The much to be lamented, and truly affecting loss . . . is a calamity of melancholy magnitude and distressing operation, and it is to . . . this small Community, a wound bordering upon vital . . . which will long remain unhealed. . . . The severe dispensation holds forth an humiliating picture to human pride and this affecting lesson to the survivors of those departed worthies, that neither blooming health, nor blooming prospects, nor the undissembled affection of admiring friends, can avert the awful fate which, He who rules the Winds and Waves, dispenses to Man . . . Bowing as we ought to the will of an overruling Providence, let us . . . submit with the fortitude of Christians, and suffer the tide of grief . . . to subside into a calm of pious resignation.

Two centuries later, however, Brendan O'Brien is not so piously resigned. He looks beyond an act of God and seeks a man to blame. Having presented his evidence, the modern jurist offers his judgement: the most guilty party was Lieutenant-Governor Peter Hunter. Readers of *Speedy Justice* should, of course, reach their own verdicts.

Chris Raible is the author of the recently published "Muddy York Mud: Scandal and Scurrility in Upper Canada", (Curiosity House, Toronto, 1992).

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Books Received

Recently published books on Canadian history include:

Empress of Britain: Canadian Pacific's Greatest Ship. By Gordon Turner. Stoddart/Boston Mills Press, Toronto and Erin, Ontario, 1993. 216 pp., illus. $35.00.

The Fight for Canada: Four Centuries of Resistance to American Expansion. By David Orchard. Stoddart, Toronto, 1993. 292 pp. $17.95.

Them Days: Memories of a Prairie Valley. By Olga Klimko and Michael Taft. Fifth House Publishers, Saskatoon, 1993. 142 pp., illus. $12.95.

Huron: Grand Bend to Southampton. By Sandra Orr. Stoddart/Boston Mills Press, Toronto and Eden, Ontario, 1993. 160 pp., illus. $35.00.

A Short History of Quebec. By John A. Dickson and Brian Young. Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., Mississauga, Ontario, 1993. 388 pp., illus. $19.95.

Basque Whaling in Labrador in the 16th Century. By Jean-Pierre Proulx. National Historic Sites Parks Service, Environment Canada, Ottawa, 1993. 108 pp., illus. $8.95.

Speaking of Canada: The Centennial History of the Canadian Clubs. By Russell R. Merifield. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1993. 136 pp., illus. $14.99.

Habitants and Merchants in Seventeenth Century Montreal. By Louise Dechêne, translated by Liana Vardi. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 1993. 432 pp, $24.95.

THE PACKET

Letters, Notes and Opinion

Gliders Over the Canadian North

"Canada's Flying Huskies" by Peter Candy [*The Beaver*, February/March 1993] is a good article about a little known part of Canadian Armed Forces history.

I note a minor error in the item. Mr. Candy states that "The Rhine crossing was the last time gliders would feature in a military operation." This is true if you add "in wartime".

Gliders were used by the military during Operation Musk Ox in the spring of 1946. I believe they were Horsa Gliders. I was a production assistant with the National Film Board at the time, in charge of the motion picture and stills photo coverage of the operation. I did not witness the actual glider drops but I saw the black and white film footage shot by Sargeant Roger Racine who was the expedition movie photographer with the moving force. (Lieutenant George Cooper was the stills photographer).

My memory is that the glider was fitted as a machine shop and dropped to the ice on either Great Bear Lake at the Eldorado mine site and/or the ice of the Mackenzie River at Fort Norman. The shop equipment was used to repair damage to vehicles so they could continue the trip to Edmonton.

Dakota aircraft of the Transport Squadron were used throughout the Musk Ox Operation. They air-dropped supplies to the moving force on the ground; they landed on unprepared ice strips whenever possible; they towed and retrieved the glider. In addition, a transport squadron Norseman landed near the moving force at many locations in the Keewatin and Mackenzie districts. I believe one of the Norseman pilots was Joe Coombes who had been a pilot with the Hudson's Bay Company Transport Division.

Doug Wilkinson,
Kingston, Ontario.

Again, Sam

The rambling life of *Red River Valley* [Explorations, *The Beaver* February/March 1993] struck a chord. My wife and I were visiting China and found ourselves the total audience in our hotel's piano lounge. The pianist played lavish renditions of music likely to be recognized by foreigners. With help, I chatted with him.

When I told him we came from Canada, he pounced onto the keyboard and played a 20-minute version of *Red River Valley* that would have made Carmen Cavallero weep. When I queried his choice, I was told that it is a "very famous Canadian song in China". Now I wish I had asked for the local lyrics.

Norman Avery,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Still Looking At Skulls

The "unidentified" member of the Hazen party, shown in the photo on page 31 of the June/July 1993 issue [The Tropic of Ellesmere] is C.R. ("Dick") Harrington, who is mentioned in the article. Dick has for a long time been with Canada's National Museum of Natural Sciences as a palaeobiologist. He, therefore, still "examines a musk-ox skull" or two, 35 years later.

Also mentioned is party member C. Ian Jackson, who returned to the U.K. with a Ph.D. from McGill to teach at London University, where he was my second-year undergraduate tutor. It was he who urged me to apply to McGill for graduate work. Jackson later returned to Canada to work in Urban Affairs in Ottawa.

If I may, I might also recall another Hazen-ite mentioned in the article, D. Ingle Smith (inevitably nicknamed "Dingle"), who also returned to the U.K. and has taught in the Department of Geography at the University of New South Wales for many years. I recall Jackson's story of Smith spending the long dark days on Ellesmere constructing topographic profiles across Newfoundland from hundreds of topographic maps that he'd taken up, intending to follow up with field studies on "The Rock". An oversupply of rolls of not-so-cottony-soft toilet paper came in handy for these yards and yards of profile.

Smith did not follow up his field-work plan. Guess who did!

Ian A. Brookes,
Department of Geography,
York University,
North York, Ontario.

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A New Vision of the Past

Jack Bumsted believes it's impossible to write a history of Canada these days. Having concluded that, he went ahead and wrote one. His 1,100-page *The Peoples of Canada*, which appeared in two volumes late in 1992, is the newest, and just maybe the last, attempt by one scholar to wrap up the whole history of the country.

Bumsted, a professor at St. John's College of the University of Manitoba, has American roots, and he first came to Canada to join the founding faculty of British Columbia's Simon Fraser University in 1965. Since then he has written widely about the early history of both Western Canada and the Maritimes, exploring such subjects as immigration, religion, the Selkirk settlers and Prince Edward Island politics. "I was never hung up in that lockstep of Honour's essay to M.A. to Ph.D to life's work all in one subject," he now says. "I've bopped around — except for central Canada! I've stayed out of central Canada for the most part."

Bumsted recalls that when he started his historical career some thirty-five years ago, it was more or less expected that senior scholars would undertake broad survey histories as the capstone of their career. Historians such as Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton, Maurice Careless, Edgar McInnis, and Kenneth McNaught each wrote a general survey of Canadian history in the decades after World War II.

"You could conceive of being a Canadian historian," says Bumsted of the years up to the end of the 1960s. "You could read everything in Canadian history, keep up with the new books and all the journals, and not worry much about specialization. You could write as if you were in control of the whole thing."

Today survey histories are mostly written by teams of scholars, or they focus on some particular theme within Canadian history. There is a simple reason why the one-author survey is vanishing. With so many historians working, so many books and articles and separate fields of study, it is almost impossible for anyone to keep up with it all. Bumsted has made one more effort,

J.M. Bumsted.

maybe the last, to see if one scholar can keep up with everything in the field of Canadian history.

He doesn't claim to have read everything, in fact, "but I have read a lot." Indeed he has. The list of suggested readings for *The Peoples of Canada* runs to twenty-two pages, and that is just books, not articles. It suggests an heroic effort of reading and digesting and notetaking, even while he was writing a good deal himself. Specialists will doubtless quibble, but no one will deny that Bumsted has read and considered a prodigious amount of writing about this country's past.

But Bumsted sees an even more fundamental challenge facing would-be synthesizers today. "The traditional synthesizing way of looking at the past had vanished, but there was no new vision to replace it," he writes in *The Peoples of Canada*. The traditional way, he argues, was rooted in political history. Its theme was building the nation — as the title of Lower's classic *Colony to Nation* suggests. Ottawa, the political capital, was the centre of the nation and its history.

In recent years, the political definition of what matters in Canadian history has been challenged, if not overturned, by all kinds of other points of view — regional, ethnic, class-based, or gendered identities, for example. As a result, the roadmap to Canadian history seems to have turned into a funhouse maze. And the political identity of Canada has itself been fundamentally challenged since the 1960s. How do you write the history of the nation if it is about to come to bits?

"That old version, with an Ottawa-based or national view, had its own chronology. It had a shape. If you junk that, you have to try to figure out a new chronology and discover the new themes of new periods." Bumsted thinks too many historians go on using the old ways, even as they criticize them, in order to avoid that difficult task.

Bumsted didn't want to do that. "It's important to rethink the shape of Canadian history. I don't think any one book can do that, but it's a problem, that there are no roadmaps. The research my students do, it just doesn't fit into a framework by Creighton."

So Bumsted's ambitions for his book were large. He wanted not only to cover the whole field, but also to work out a new shape for the history of Canada at the same time.

His new shape is most evident in the turning points he selects. Former landmarks like the War of 1812 or Canadian exploits in the world

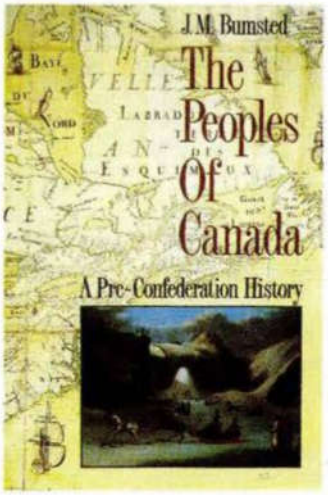
wars get only a paragraph or two. Not even 1867 is sacred. Bumsted thinks — and it seems obvious when you think about it — that the nation was really put together about 1885, when most of the present territory of Canada had been added and the railway was completed to link it together. Most of the dates of Bumsted's chronology are like that. They relate to broad economic or cultural trends, often international ones, and they have little to do with who happens to be taking office in Ottawa. Another of his turning points is 1972, which he sees as the end of confident Ottawa-centred national endeavour, the beginning of doubt and demolition. And the symbol he chooses to mark the change? The Canada-USSR hockey series! "It's for Canadians what the Kennedy assassination is for Americans. Everyone of that generation knows where they were," he says.

The hallmark of contemporary historical writing is its concern with social and economic history and the broad trends of how people live and work and relate to one another. *The Peoples of Canada* reflects that, with its long passages on, for instance, the nineteenth-century farming, fishing, woodcutting industries in which most Canadians worked, or the explosive growth of cities and suburbs in the twentieth century.

Bumsted fleshes out that material with close attention to cultural history. Bumsted's literary interests are wide — he's a connoisseur of science fiction and has dabbled in script-writing — and in this book he includes both "high" and popular culture, from the Gaelic poetry of Scottish immigrants to skipping chants he picked up on his kid's playing fields. "I tried to introduce Canadian culture as a serious player in the history."

His other contribution is characters. Whatever social or economic trend he is discussing, Bumsted produces, seemingly effortlessly, some individual to illustrate and personalize the issue. From the frustrations of Elizabeth Smith, an early woman doctor, to the wanderings of Wilson Benson, an immigrant who seems to be becoming the classic Canadian Everyman for historians of the nineteenth century, Bumsted furnishes *The Peoples of Canada* with a picture gallery of odd and often intriguing people and events.

Bumsted's ambition for this book was to write a history, not a text. Unlike academics who presume the general reader is much like an



undergraduate but denser, Bumsted thinks *The Peoples of Canada* is probably too sophisticated for student use. "I wrote this as a trade book," he says. Though he assumes his publisher wants it to become a textbook as well, he is hoping there is an audience of Canadians ready to go with him on a long, challenging exploration of a new model of Canadian history.

Is there? Perhaps the funniest review of *The Peoples of Canada*, by historian Don Akenson of Queen's University, begins, "Despite what they taught you in school, Canadian history is boring." Akenson is full of admiration for Jack Bumsted, "the kind of guy you would want to know, have a few drinks with, argue a bit." But he thinks that any book that has to cover all of Canadian history inevitably must cram in too much routine stuff to be a good read.

Bumsted bridles at this: "I've never felt Canadian history is boring. And I think that minutiae is interesting too. I present my trivia in a non-trivial way." He points to Ottawa's Thomas Ahearn, who invented the electric stove in 1892. In Bumsted's hands it is not just some trivial first, he says, but an example of a whole wave of technical and commercial innovations in Canadian cities." Still, Akenson has a point. This is a long, tough, serious read, with masses of information and a conscious effort to avoid many of the events that have traditionally given colour and drama to Canadian history. It is at least an open question whether the audience Bumsted aspires to serve really exists. None of the great popular historians of Canada, with their acute sense of where the readers are, has ever attempted a survey history.

For all its "new" aspirations, Bumsted thinks his history may also be the last of a style of history-writing. He says that after a lot of thought about the "voice" that an historian of Canada should adopt, he settled on one that he calls "omniscient and slightly ironic." He always gives one interpretation of events rather than setting out rival theories, and he likes to find paradoxes and ironies rather than engage in partisanship. That style he sees as essentially modern, influenced by the great modern writers of the 1950s and 1960s. If the modern style is about to be replaced by some post-modern version of subjective, juxtaposed interpretations, Bumsted is content to be found on the earlier side of the great divide.

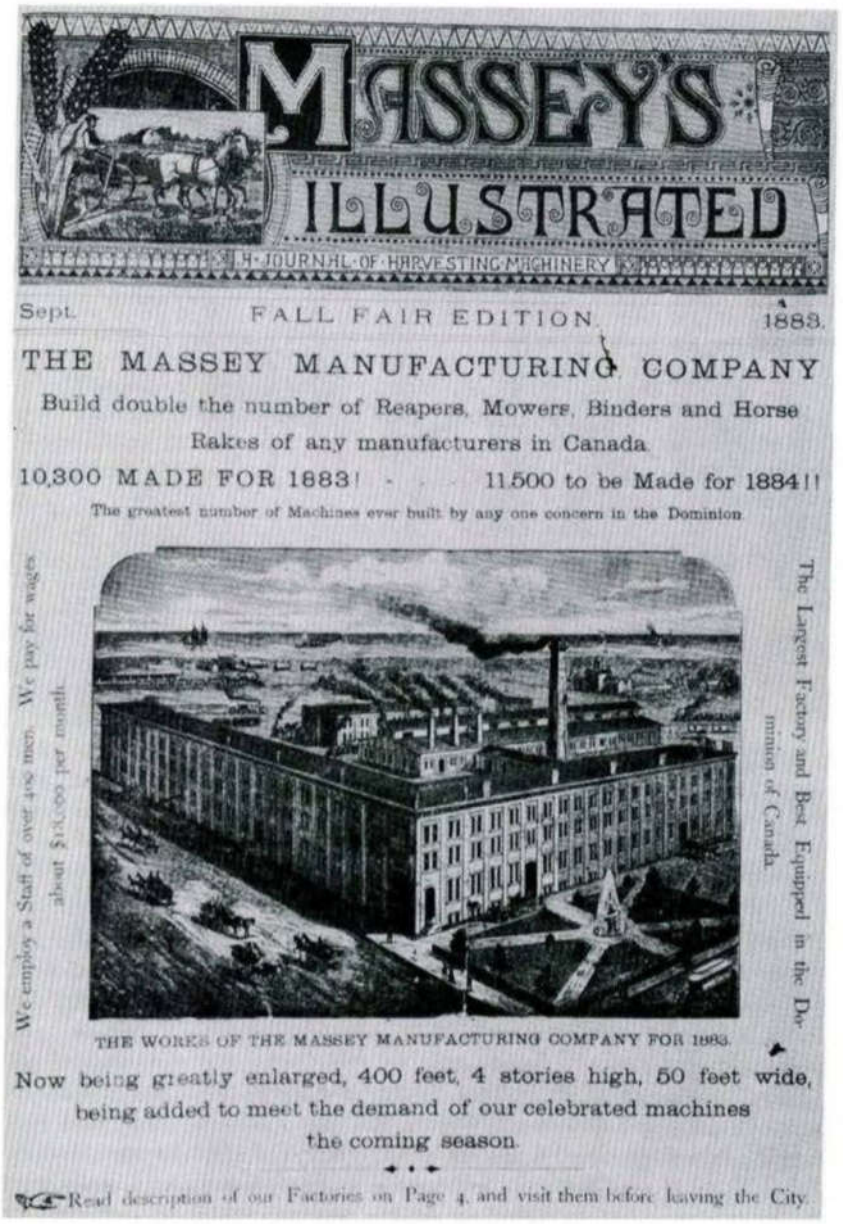

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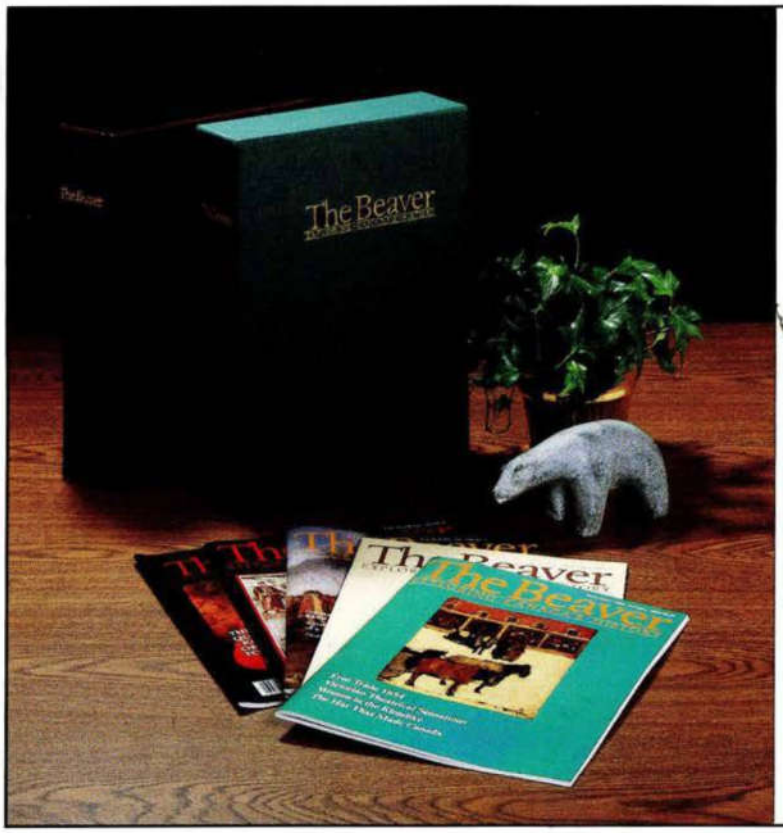
Illustration from "The Peoples of Canada: A Pre-Confederation History" by J.M. Bumsted.

There's no doubt *The Peoples of Canada* represents an almost herculean effort both to master and to reorganize the Canadian past. Bumsted is both modest and proud about it. "I'm not persuaded that any one book can do that, but this one does contribute to the debate. It is important to stake out new ground for Canadian history. It is important to think things through. Historians have to know where they stand."

And what does the historian of Canada do when he has done the whole history of Canada? Jack Bumsted is not about to rest from his labours. "I have about a dozen big projects to choose from. And I'm doing a lot of little projects too."♦

J.M. Bumsted's "The Peoples of Canada" is published by Oxford University Press of Canada in two volumes: "A Pre-Confederation History" and "A Post-Confederation History."



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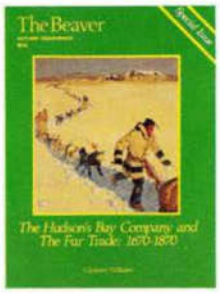

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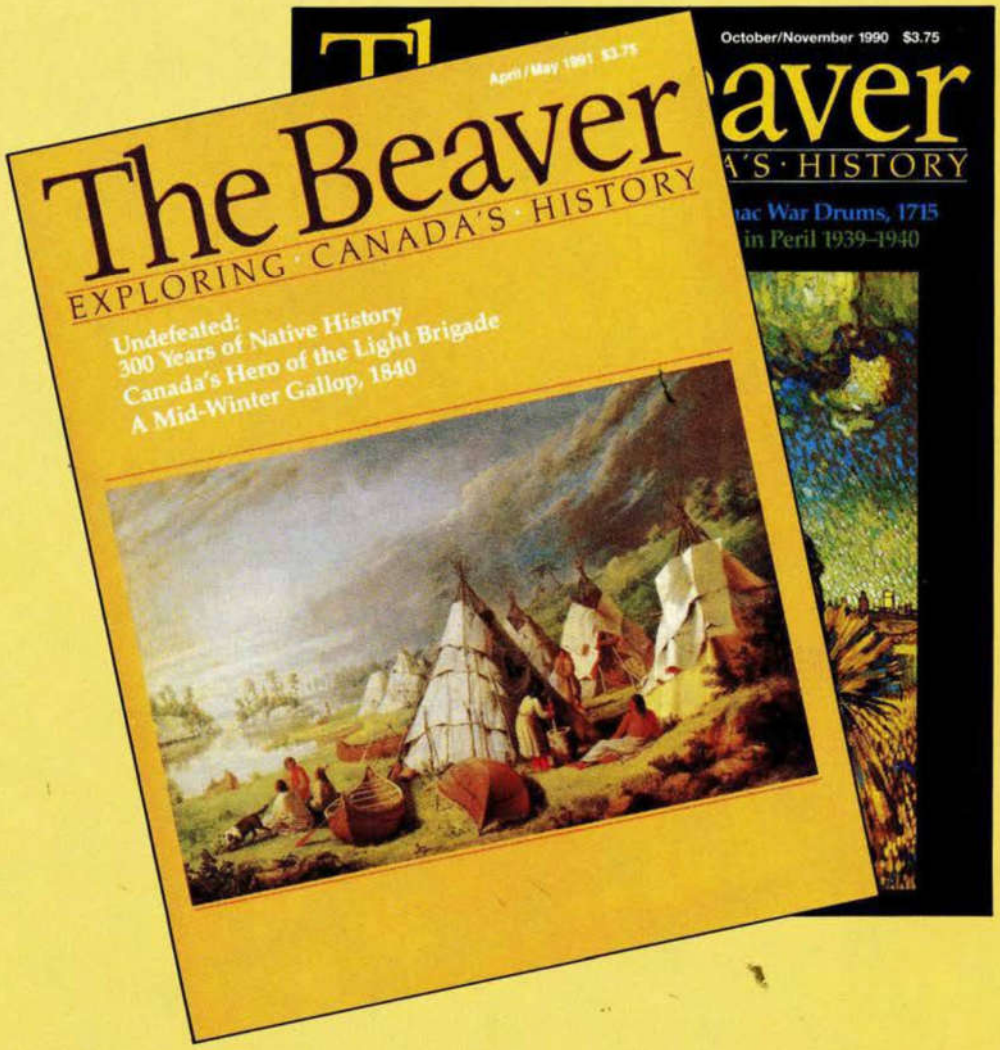

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